


... my

walk

through

darkness



unto

hidden

riches

Lucille Poulin

My Walk Through Darkness Unto Hidden Riches

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ISBN 978-1-897080-75-7

First Printing in book format August 2016

Printed in the United States of America

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Published by:

Cornerstone Press (*which operates as and manages www.bibleconcepts.com*)

Eric J. Ellis

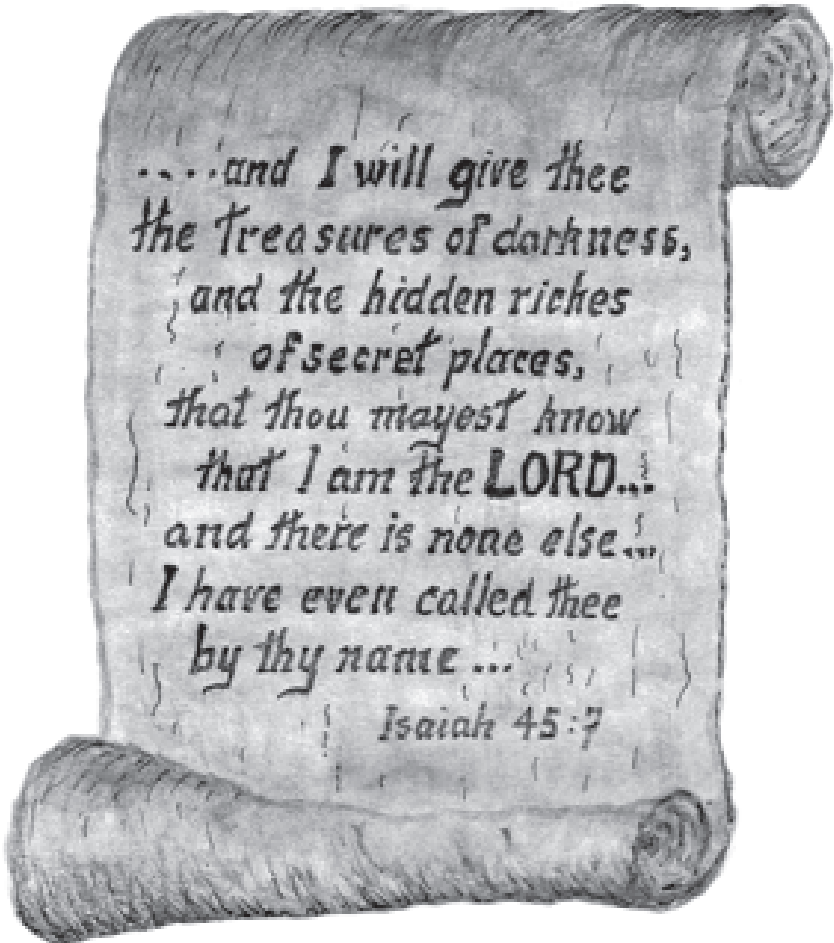
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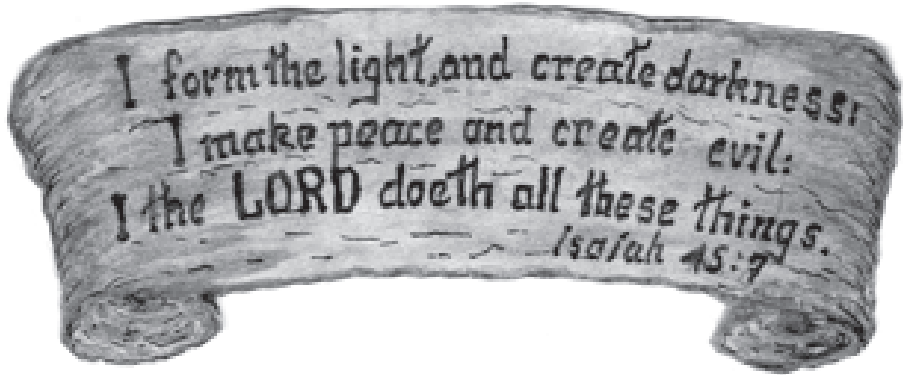
Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

Some of the names have been changed to protect the identity of the people.

A scroll with a textured, parchment-like surface, rolled at the top and bottom. The text is written in a cursive script.

...and I will give thee
the Treasures of darkness,
and the hidden riches
of secret places,
that thou mayest know
that I am the **LORD**...
and there is none else...
I have even called thee
by thy name ...

Isaiah 45:7

A scroll with a textured, parchment-like surface, rolled at the top and bottom. The text is written in a cursive script.

I form the light, and create darkness;
I make peace and create evil:
I the **LORD** doeth all these things.

Isaiah 45:7

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Dedication

In Memory of my loving valiant
parents, a heart-felt tribute.

An affectionate respect to my
kindred, and to all who emerged with
me in search of the “Truth.”

A deep loving appreciation for the
few highly dedicated brethren whose
assistance has made it possible for
this “Memoir” to be issued.

Introduction

One may wonder – another book?

Fear not! It springs forth from a severely broken heart having experienced a marvelous healing that is ongoing into my early nineties.

Excerpts from many years of struggle while in an ardent search for my Lord, has been transformed. In the rest of God now comes forth a message energizing the hope of mankind, especially that of broken-hearts and bruised souls.

This former nun known as Sister Martha (Lucille Poulin), once delivered from the power of darkness and from acute despair, heartily unveils her personal experience in discovering the secret path to serenity, peace, and assurance forever!

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

(John 8:12)

Preface

Fellow sojourner, as we walk together on “Memoir Lane,” I purpose to reminisce my ninety year life span. O marvelous opportunity to extoll God’s loving kindness and tender mercies to my soul!

Born of “good” parents, I filed in under the curse of Eden - ***that is, sin, death and religiosity*** - the same slavery which engulfed my ancestry. Though I had enjoyment in farm life, at an early age the fear of death and condemnation plagued me. At age fourteen, having heard a fragment of truth, “***Jesus loved me and died for my sins,***” a ray of hope is sealed in my heart. This incentive of love buoyed me through challenging, tedious, yet momentous thirty-five years of nunhood.

These years of long constant quest for Jesus, gradually turn to acute discouragement. An ardent cry of the heart unto this “unknown” Lover, dispatches from His own heart, a powerful wave of loving mercy. Overshadowed with a penetrating joyful knowledge of being “***forgiven,***” I become a “new creation” – ***this is from sinner to saint...YES,*** a saint who needed much, much refining. Unknown to me then, but now I know that I am being transformed into a “crucible,” to rank among the King of king’s Overcomers!

This is my story - this is my song!
From dirge-like existence, to Kingdom of God
In divine living, all eternity-long!

Oh! the tremendous power of love that lies in a humble abandonment to Jesus Christ!

Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9) – *Revealed to man by God’s Spirit.*

Surely, this is love, far beyond the horizon!

Precious Wayfarer, being on the verge of our embarkment, it is my delight to present to you ***“Our Escort,” “Faithful Witness,”*** well renown as ***“Knight of Shining Armor,”*** in fact, He is the very essence of our voyage.

Though His Majesty shall lead us through shadowy vales of “death,” we will fear no evil, as our heavenly Father’s promises in Him are yea and amen!

Hence our journey through darkness and mysterious secret places will reveal the untold treasures and riches therein concealed.

In good cheer, let us be on our way!

ACT ONE.

Destiny of Man in Pioneer Land

Scene 1 - Hurry, Hurry, Baby's Coming!

Arm in arm, two women are pressing on toward a very definite goal. It is just a special day of July 1924. The dew is still on the roses – the rising sun sends golden rays on the Vermilion Brook – flickering hope and courage in two hearts, Aunt Philomena and Rose Alba. As they cross over the rickety wooden bridge, their gait is abruptly halted, but soon resumed at the pressing command of Rose Alba: “Let’s go!”

Within moments, they are at the hospital door. The courteous nurse is greeted with an urgent plea, “hurry! hurry! the baby is coming.” Refusing to panic, she graciously escorts her patient to a bed. At her prompt return from fetching the “delivery kit,” she finds a changed scene. Now is a relaxed, content mother and a newborn’s cry. No problem – it’s all over – I’m here!

Oof! what a tedious journey – the way so narrow – pressure from all sides, especially from the unrelenting pusher. There was only one way to go to reach my destination. Received by my mother’s skillful hands, now resting on her tummy, I am just getting accustomed to this new sphere of existence on the race course of humanity.

Scene 2 - Train of the Dark Ages

Henri Poulin (1877-1940)

As a young man, my father came from Kansas, the bread basket of the United States, and settled in Vegreville, Alberta. With his parents and siblings, he courageously came to blaze virgin land in North Western Canada.



My father Henri Poulin

The Québécois pioneers received them graciously. Henri, the ardent young “homesteader” soon becomes the bridegroom of a lovely farm maiden. Within four months, he is plunged into consternation as his bride is swept away by pneumonia. However, the unbearable void is somewhat filled with another lovely bride named Mélanie. A new love and contentment pervades in their rustic home, as they steadily work with other pioneers.

Within the year, Mélanie is pregnant. Their great rejoicing awaiting their first born is shattered, as the infant does not survive the delivery. Comforting one another in this pitiful loss, they continue valiantly on, in this existence strewn with ephemeral joys, and heavy laden with sorrows.

Two years later, baby Adolphe is born being a source of healing to his parents. In due time, their third child is arriving. Henri is waiting in a nearby room. The doctor appears with an unusual somberness and announces, “*Mr. Poulin, you have a healthy girl, but...your wife had a heart attack and we were not able to revive her.*” Nurses immediately join the compassionate doctor, attempting to assist this deliriously grieved husband.

Alerted parents and siblings arrive. A dead silence, broken by sobs, overcasts the embraces – what is there to say? They retreat together to their heavily stricken settlement. The sympathetic priests offer their best comfort, but with lifeless words. It is no wonder, for they being victims of religious bondage are unaware of the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort – ***Jesus Christ the “Life-Giver.”***

All seems rather settled. Kinfolk have endeavored to care for aging grandpa, and Henri's two children. Disheartened, Henri shudders silently and becomes overburdened with heart trouble, as he can only see a hopeless future before him, he muses sadly, "Surely death is for me also."

Scene 3 - Lionhearts in Chains

Rose Alba Benoit (1885-1986)

The life of hard-working settlers is interrupted as Jean-Baptiste Benoit with his daughter, Rose Alba, two Québécois pioneers are arriving. Tired but joyful they descend from the black, impressive steam-engine train, young and old, as a large family press close to the newcomers. Greeting them with a hearty "welcome," they are most eager to have news from the motherland, "La belle province!" Memoirs die hard!

Jean Baptiste, a widower, and his years as a laborer ended, is quite content to undertake with his daughter this new life-style, joining with the pioneers as forerunners. Rose Alba, bereaved of her mother at the age of fourteen, took over household duties as well as raising her five younger siblings, almost by herself. Her father, a laborer, worked long hours six days a week, away from home.

Suitors, one after another, suffered refusal to their proposal, while Rose Alba intensely dedicated to her father and five siblings, smothered her deep yearning to share her love in marriage. Now, almost thirty years old, she is harassed by receiving nostalgic feelings of warmth in her heart so quenched at the time of proposal, and now suitors are no more!

In spite of her mind strength proclaiming to herself, "Marriage is not for me," Rose is very disheartened. A cry arises from her true heart, "My God, help me!" With courage she ventures anew in her present task, housekeeping for her father.

Precious Reader, let's take a little break.

Here is a fallen great oak tree – a great seating place. Announcing my birth some ninety years ago with a pioneer setting, rates me a “peasant girl.” Ten years prior to my precipitated birth is the amazing union of my parents. In spite of being plagued with the curse of Eden and religiosity fallen on them from ancestral lineage, they were valiant and courageous.

Now, let's return to Memoirs....

Scene 4 - Chivalric Romance - Destiny?

In the vicinity resides a sickly widower struggling to recuperate from heart trouble and excessive grief. At some casual gathering of the “settlers,” joyful acquaintances are developing. Far beyond any expectation, Henri’s sorrowful eyes meet Rose Alba’s dimmed vision. Instantly their hearts beat in unison, triggering an unfathomable love – *the kind that generates life* – the love that never fails, doing wonders!

Rose Alba’s little strong tower concerning marriage for her, crashes. Light rays clear her vision, creating a serene peaceful assurance, “This man is for me.” Henri, also speechless, experiences a surge of strength, a ray of hope piercing through stationary, morbid clouds – that is, a long-standing “doom and gloom.” “Surely this must be a dream,” he muses. Yet he feels a comfort and the spark seems to be developing into a flame....

With courage and dedicated affection, free from endless deliberation, Rose Alba calmly initiates a private encounter with this “downhearted” man. It is a purposeful venture indeed! Endowed with dauntlessness and remarkable stability, Rose Alba with a candid and serene assurance proceeds with her unique kind of proposal. “I truly love you Henri...I sincerely believe you are the man for me.”

Henri, harassed with a pervading despondency, is awestruck at this possibility flashing before him. However, stirred by a heart-warming comfort of love, he swoons into a response filled with genuine concern. “Rose...it is so wonderful for me...

but...impossible for you...I cannot bear to see you undertake such heavy burdens...my health, my finances, two children... grandpa....”

Ignoring his painful comments, this invincible woman, Rose Alba, interrupts with an affectionate serenity, advances with a proposal unique for the situation. “Henri you are so very precious to me...can we set our marriage date?” “Indeed, indeed, Rose Alba...all I know at this time is a joy and peace in me that I never had – I think it’s love....” Then and there, their heart-life and destiny seals in an unfathomable bond of faithfulness and persevering love – of which I am a living witness – and this – through “thick and thin.”

Scene 5 - A Childhood Memoir

During certain winter nights, we children on our belly, palms under chin, are so cozy on Maman’s (*Mama*) braided mat. As we gaze at the vehemently glowing flames in the old “pot-belly” furnace, we are spell-bound listening to Maman talking about a tale that never grew old.

In her old rocking chair, moving slightly in a rhythmic motion, Maman is dexterously knitting socks for Papa. With notable delight she recounts the ancient romance of an “old maid” and an “old man” becoming young again through the power of love.

Papa on his old “creaky rocker,” hands behind his head, chewing his plug tobacco, leaning forward occasionally to use his spittoon, leans back again with his special smile of contentment. Henri’s few glittering tears mysteriously enhances the ageless, soul-stirring narrative as their bright eyes meet.

Scene 6 - Mysteries of Marriage - Love

Back to days of Yore

Somehow, the homesteaders apparently settled are now

frantically upset at this “rushed up” marriage. Their fury flares in destructive comments: “What? that “half-dead” man marrying that “lame” old maid – what a shame in our midst! We thought that they would have had more sense...”

Within the week, the marriage is simply officiated by the parish priest. Amazingly, the spiteful flames of opposition are more readily quenched than they had been kindled! The banquet table is filled with joyful pioneers. The home-prepared delicious “pioneer” style meal, furnished and put together by Rose Alba and a few willing helpers, is served to everyone by herself and her joyful bridegroom. Unassumingly, the “newly-wed” join the exuberant banqueters (*red wine helping*), to heartily partake of the abundance.

Scene 7 – Three Cherished Live Treasures

The day is far spent. Rose Alba arises in the midst of the lively gathering, causing a halt, and proceeds to express her heart-felt gratitude for the honor of their presence. With delightful serenity and vivid joy, the bride bursts out her appreciation for her God-given bridegroom, and the immense privilege she has this very night (*far from realizing what dauntlessness is impelling her into such grandeur of endeavor*). Little Emilia, young Adolphe and “Pépère (*grandpa*)” Poulin are coming home with us tonight! Because it is all a matter of love, her heart is overwhelmed with anticipation.

How wonderful a new beginning – a three generation family. After the wedded placidly and most heartily embrace, Henri presents his two little ones to their Maman. Cherished at first touch, they melt in their mother’s arms. Precious Joseph draws near his “daughter” – dear Pépère, he too lines up with his meaningful caress. Through all this, Henri’s feeble heart has worked at full capacity, and the man is “worn out,” but has the healthy contentment, that this is no dream, it is now a marvelous reality! Arising to express his gratitude to everyone who so graciously assisted him during his bygone acute distresses, he is overtaken by the “feasters” breaking into an affectionate ovation!

Soon, the nuptial couple begins to move homeward in unison to P  p  re’s slow gait. What a momentous night! Their dedication to these “three precious live treasures” has already begun a transformation in their rustic pioneer home. Expectation looms at the horizon, obliterating desolation and despondency. Amazingly, though still sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death, their feet are guided toward the “Light and the Way of Peace!” It all stems from a work of “Love and Forgiveness” – gifts from above.

Scene 8 - Bursting Out on Life’s Racecourse

Early on a bright August day, Henri and Rose, completely ignorant of their utter spirited darkness are enjoying their buggy ride coming from the hospital. Rose is cuddling snugly to her breast, their eight day old little girl. We’ll soon be home, as old Fan trots much faster coming home, than going anywhere. Except for the rhythmic sound of her hoofs on the gravel and the chirping birds, all is quiet. Occasional few words break their meditative mood: “Well, Rose, our five year old is fine...let’s hope this little one will live on,” Papa expresses with a sigh, as he brings to remembrance the loss of their five older ones, through an epidemical diphtheria.

“My dear Henri, let’s not think about it – it just hurts too much.” Rose feebly attempts some comfort, as they both gaze at their little treasure, their new babe, Lucille. Showered with tenderness and care, I emerge as Papa’s “little princess,” Maman’s “petite fille (*girl*),” Emilia’s “living doll”...and eventually often cherished of my brother, yet frequently, his nuisance. Within four years, valiant Rose of forty-three brings forth my brother, Jean Rosaire.

Endowed with an energetic character, a quick credulous mind and a generous heart, I readily get into more predicament than all my peers. Extremely hungry for attention, only much later would I appreciate the wisdom and patience of my parents and teachers!

Excerpts of infancy

Maman, with a sigh releases a concern, “This baby is always in a hurry and nowhere to go! Three to four minutes of nursing and finished, she adamantly turns away.” A personal trait found to be very useful, but also annoying....

Now a toddler, I am in a store with Papa, I snatch a little bronze iron horse from a low shelf. Papa attempts to set it back, but I like it so much, it is secure in my possessive grip. Papa pays the few cents, thus curtailing the fretfulness of his precious “little princess.”

My “Pépère” is now sleeping on a strange high bed in the living room. Uncles and aunts come in and out, Papa and Maman are sad. I must see for myself what this is all about. Climbing on a chair, I lean over as usual to kiss him. Stunned I cry, “Maman, Maman, Pépère is cold.” Gently drawing me away, my grieving mother comforts me and endeavors to explain that Pépère is gone with God. She draws me away from the death scene, of which I have a faint remembrance.

At about the same age, I discover in the backyard an old thresher blower. A shout in it is answered, and so fascinating that propelling myself inside would be fun. Though it is rather tight, my runners grip the metal providing a forward trend, but fear overtakes my fun experiences. An iron bar partially obstructing the other end, leaves no exit, and backward motion seems impossible. “Maman, Maman,” are my desperate cries. By this time, my patient mother, in search of her adventurous “petite fille,” hears the cries. My feet on her long-handled hoe, the rescue mission is accomplished. “My dear, let me know next time where you go,” is her strong exhortation.

Three young colts, Silver, Star and Molly, frolicking about seem to welcome my great desire for a riding spree. Papa’s warning, not to ride a colt that young is known, but I want to, and I do, it’s great, but ends abruptly, as father arrives from the field. His “little princess” got a spanking that day!

Next best to those rides are Papa's fictitious tales, with something new every time! Sitting on his knee, my arm half around his neck – I am spell-bound. He begins slowly, "Once upon a time, there was a little golden horse...he could do anything...he could even gallop in the sky...and not only that, but he could gallop on the oceans – over the waves and not sink." My need is so great, I interrupt vehemently, "Papa, can I have one like that?" Oh no, my little one, money cannot buy one just like that now – but in heaven, God will give you all you want." Tears flood my eyes with disappointment, "Papa, heaven is so far away, and I want it now...."

Fully seven, I've just come home from the priest's catechism class on creation. Just putting in action what I have learned, I go behind the house where there is loose black soil, and right there is a barrel of rain water – all I really need – I proceed...the mud seems just right with which I form my "first man" – not excellent, but it will do! Holding it snugly, I blow on it, and blow and blow, but it does not move. I need help! Running to Maman, puffing, "it doesn't work...," I begin to explain. Promptly, my keen, patient mother quietly instructs me, "But, my little Lucille, only God creates, and you are not God."

Scene 9 – Life's Just Great!

I've begun going to school, not knowing a word of English. The most striking event I recall is how appalled I was at what was going on behind the teacher's back- at recesses. Of course, upon Maman is spilled out my heavy burden, burying my face in her belly-right upon her well-worn apron. Standing by our old wood stove, her hands gently around my shoulders, "What is it my little Lucille?" Her loving voice already relieves my aching heart, "Maman, the little black boy cries a lot, the other children laugh at him, and run away from him – sometimes even slap him...," expressing my problem. "Lucille, that is sad, and what can we do? But you must remember, if the "black people" love God more than we do, they are better people than us." Somehow, my child's burden is lifted, and I went off to play.

Still missing those colt rides, comes to me a bright idea! Long-legged “Bessie” – Papa’s slender bodied mare excellent galloper. To my request, Papa’s response is conditional, “If you make sure that she is watered and fed every day, also that you “herd-on” the milk cows – *slowly* to pasture, to and fro, morning and evening, then she’s yours, but, I cannot afford a saddle.” “Oh yes, Papa, can I have her today,” zestfully I asked, and she’s mine!

Great, I’m on my own, but how do I get up there, I wonder? Swinging a bridle on my arm, I fetch a half can of oats, off I go to the nearby small pasture gate. Shaking the oat-can I call, “Come, come Bessie!” Perking forward her ears, she’s here, oats disappear – we’re both happy! Slipping on the bridle, I lead her to tufts of grass, hanging on to her mane I embark on her neck just behind her ears. As she raises her head, she slides me on her back, we’re off on a gallop in the meadows.

“Can anyone in this world have such enjoyment,” I muse within myself. At the delightful rhythm and feeling of her galloping gait, I sing my cowboy songs, such as “Home, home, on the range... where the deer and the antelopes play, where seldom is heard a discouraging word...and the skies are not cloudy all day.” Being so carefree, I think “life is just great!”

Scene 10 – Disciplined? Bewildered

**Born in a hurry, received by Mom’s hands,
I must have looked around; what a strange land!
There I am energetic, and ready to go;
Where I would end up, far for me to know....**

**Anyway, I grew up, thinking this is my fate on life’s course;
A carefree little “sweetie,” riding her horse.
With a much older sister, who did really care,
To help our Mother, all house duties to share.**

Free as a bird, as I thought I was then,
I didn't have to work, and I was about ten.
Mother dared to ask her "little darling" one day,
To do all the dishes, and in the house to stay.

Head to the side, hands on my hips, teeth well clenched,
"I don't want to," I said, a rebellious girl - what a stench!
From the green willows, Maman gets a twig,
Swings it on my poor legs - did I dance a jig!

Deep in rebellion, I shout, "Doing dishes, I won't."
Another swing, "will you do it Lucille?" - but I won't.
A third blow, just harder this time, of course, I do cry;
Sobbing and pouting, "Maman doesn't love me, and I don't know why."

The dishes are done with salt water indeed!
To my chunk of self-pity, I now fully heed.
I'll go to be eaten up by the coyotes, and surely will die;
Maman will feel so sorry, then she will really cry.

My hard work is over, and down the valley I go;
Surely, as I sit waiting, the coyotes will know.
While eating rose petals, I crack a big worm,
Spitting it out - my heart's broken I'm so really torn!

Called in for supper - I'm not loved, I won't go...
I'll eat worms on petals - but how will I grow?
Well I guess, I'll just die -that'll be the end of me;
Actually, I don't want to - just want to be free!

From far, aching Maman, watches her child;
"Why, oh why should this happen - what makes her so wild?
Yet "stewing in her own juice" - will be like a sieve,
This, everyone must go through, to learn how to live."

By now - so mixed up - I don't know what to do.
Sure wish I could start over - I'd do things all anew.
The dusk is soon coming - now begins the terrible howl;
I'm so scared, I must go! And toward the house I prowl.

Into my bed I crawl - a gloomy lump in a heap...
Curled up like a fetus, bitterly crying myself to sleep.
Awakened by a call, "Come to breakfast my dear Lucille"
Oh, with that Love in Maman's voice, my heart is now filled.

A hearty breakfast indeed - being I'm so terribly starved,
This silly little girl - has been so very deprived!
Something has happened - "Maman, I'll do dishes for you."
My arms around her neck, "Dear Mom, you love me...I love you
too."

"Can I go ride my Bessie and lead Papa's herd?
Then gallop the meadows - listen to singing birds?
Any time you need me, dear Mom, I'll be there - of course!
To help you with joy - instead of riding my horse...."

Precious parents who care to follow divine patterns
In scourging your son - chastening your children,
Hard as it may be - everyone must understand
The essence of it all - Sovereignty of God and destiny of man.

Since then until now, I know that obeying is wise;
It cleansed so much pride, and toned down my disguise.
But, who cares for it, when we want our own way?
Love and obedience do wonders, but there is a price to pay!

The Lamb that was slain before the world began,
Came to us, on earth fulfilling His Father's plan.
He suffered, died and rose again for you and me,
Retrieved the keys of hell and death, to set captives free!

Dedicated to our Sovereign Monarch
"He who loved me and died for me."
Draw me....and we will run after thee.

ACT TWO.

From Cowgirl to Grey Convent Walls

Scene 1 - Leaving Roman Catholic Vegreville Pioneers

Leaving the French Catholic settlement in Vegreville, we moved fifty miles away to a farm in Winterburn, four miles west of Edmonton, far removed from kinfolk, yet amazingly content among protestant neighbors. They are so kind, even congenial.

Being now in my thirteenth year, I am endeavoring to deal with a few personal changes. Rosaire and I are really looking forward to enjoying our summer holidays from school.

One special evening marks the dawn of more life-changing situations for me. It is with a tender precision that my parents spell out their plan for my coming school year. “Lucille, our dear Lucille, you are growing up into womanhood, and we have arranged for you a bit of preparation. In Vegreville is where you will go to school. The hospital nuns are very kind; there will be your home. When not in school, where you’ll learn to write French and study catechism as well as ordinary stuff, you will help in the work assigned. Aunty Eugenie will take care of your clothes.”

Somewhat overwhelmed, but content, I simply agree, “Sure, and when will we go?” “Sometime in August, we will go with you, by train, and after a short visit with our relatives we will meet the hospital Sisters,” flows the smile-filled, serene, clear direction. From that moment on, Bessie is somewhat deserted and I gladly join Maman and Emilia with preparation involved in leaving home.

This sudden transition finds me often day-dreaming...Papa... Maman...Emilia...my two brothers...even Mrs. Gable – I love

her, and I think she loves me...and now my Bessie? Yet, apart of premature nostalgia, all is just fine!

Fellow sojourner, swooping back to seventy-seven years ago, our break shall be sitting in our rustic living room at Winterburn.

What is now to me, a dream, has been stark reality. Unknown to me, it is puberty time, and according to one of many religious ancestral eerie traditions – is a “hush! hush!” concerning sex as supposedly it is dirty and always mixed up with sin. Suddenly arrives what I saw as a monthly disaster, and I am now assailed by morbid thoughts, “I might just as well die.” Rising above gloomy customs, keen Maman explains peacefully, all I must know in this matter, and I listen eagerly – all is fixed up! Evidently, maturation is my most urgent need, which oncoming events will undertake!

Let's pursue with our “Memoirs.”

It is a beautiful August morning, and an unforgettable one, as mother and daughter embark this stately vehicle. I am absolutely enraptured with that impressive, huge, black majestic, whistling, powerful steam-engine train. After fifty miles of pleasant and noisy track ride, we are in Vegreville.

Soon at the hospital, we meet Sister Superior, wearing her fascinating Irish smile. Holding Maman's hand, we follow at her side into the elevator, then through a long darkish corridor and finally to cafeteria, for refreshment – we are seated and she disappears for a moment. Very close to Mom, I whisper, “Maman, I think she loves us.” “Oh yes, my dear, you'll find in her another mother.” How precious to me is that reassuring response!

The short visits to kinfolk are over – Maman is gone after settling me in my new home. Two kitchen nuns get me acquainted with surroundings including how to help them. My decision of “bravery” is most successful until a real hard task is before me...I am asked to peel, a half-big-tub full of “small” potatoes, and every

day after school...but that is so hard – so long – I just hate it! No big outbreak of such intense distress, but I murmur and mutter.

Amazingly, nuns and employees, all working steadily around me seem content not even noticing my great hardship – they even seem to like me...I wonder...?

As usual, school for me is delightful. We are twenty-five students - boys and girls in grade 8. Something unusual is happening. Hargrove is an exceptionally nice boy. I think of him a lot – finding myself somewhat daydreaming – he seems to like me...I kind of like him too, but he's always so busy – he doesn't look at me very much.... Anyway, day after day, my huge problem is those “potatoes...” they seem to be getting smaller and the tub bigger. If Maman was closer she sure would help me....

Now Sister Superior wants me to be with her at times to do other things such as, try a little typing, wash some windows, etc., and gets me to talk about school. The hospital provides a training school – about twenty-five young women at the service of the sick. The very first days after my arrival, I admire the nurses; one even tells me that it is wonderful to be able to help the sick. I know then and there, “that's exactly what I want to do – for a long time, then be married.” Now, I spill all this to Sister Superior. Placidly, with her lovely smile, she agrees, “Really Lucille, I believe you have a great idea” – and it seems, that we both thought that it was so far away....

For quite some time, the convent nuns, my teachers, talk to me about becoming a nun in their midst. My prompt response is clear with a precise declaration of my future great plans, “No, no Sister, but I'll be nurse, and after a while I'll marry a nice man....” My idle fantasizing completed, I take a brisk run to my home with the hospital nuns, where I feel so secure....

Scene 2 - Who Could This Man Be?

Catechism class is most boring to me. It's March, and Lent time – soon it will be Easter, and all that gloom and doom of making lots of sacrifices will be ended. After Easter Mass, we will enjoy life again such as eating those real good chocolate “bunnies,” and colored hard-boiled eggs.

In the there-a-bouts, Father Burke holds the catechism class. He walks in with a large, vivid painting. Speechless, he sits at the teacher's desk, and holding the frame upright, he vanishes behind it. The class, in complete silence, is seemingly fascinated by this unusual and impressive tableau.

**Was this not the dawn of great and mighty things which
I knew not?**

**Transfixed with horror, a suffering man before my face;
The thorns, the welts, the wounds – a bloody mess I see!
Arouses in me indignation, what has taken place?
His eyes closed, forehead pierced – treated without mercy.**

Who could he be?

**From behind this distressing scene resounds,
“Behold the man,” answers my question, “Who could he be?”
The golden silence is broken – but a treasure I have found.
The frame is laid down, and the priest explains the decree.**

Great! Now I'll know.

**This is Jesus who loved you, and died for your sins.
Now, each one of you must pay back such love, indeed!
By making many, many sacrifices – heaven to win.
Why it's so hard, dear children, it's all on account of greed.**

What is that? I wonder....

The preacher continues to instruct us, but the glimmer of truth is soon smothered by ancestral rituals, religious notions and tradition of man. I have no knowledge of what is happening, but my heart is saddened. “The best way to pay back that love is to become priests, monks or nuns. That means, to never marry and make many sacrifices, all the days of your life. This will also serve to expiate your sins. When you die, you’ll have to pass through purgatory for final purification to enter heaven,” sternly adding many “do’s and don’ts.” “Remember people marry because they are too passionate, and it will be extremely hard to ever get into heaven...but not totally impossible,” he warns.

This unforgettable class is over- now, I’m all mixed up again, but on my way home, the glimmer of truth – **“Jesus loves me and died for me”** – supersedes all else. An unexplainable joy arises in my heart from where springs forth, “I love you Jesus, and nothing can be too hard – you love me so much – I will be a nun.”

I cross the same rickety bridge, over the Vermilion Brook, over which I was carried some fourteen years ago, on the way to my birthplace. Though my physical substance is the same, a spiritual dawn of **“Light – Life – Love”** within my spirit has made me alive. Buoying me on in an indomitable determination persuaded that, **“heaven must be Love.”**

Scene 3 - Alone - Total Oblation - It’s a Matter of Love

The next day at school, I slip away at recess to the convent chapel across the lane. On to the third floor – no one’s around, kneeling before the altar, my forehead bearing heavily on the first step, “Jesus, Jesus, are you here in the tabernacle? – anyway, you love me and I love you – my whole life is yours, do with me what you want. I even let go becoming a nurse – even having a husband and children – even be a nun just to please you....”

At the sound of school bell, I'm soon at attention back to my studies, as usual sitting in my desk, but my mind is elsewhere. All is so vivid deep within...I must tell Sister Superior.

Scene 4 - A Nun - I Must Be

**To Sister Superior, so kind and so good,
I spill out my great plan;
Mother, I'm in love with Jesus, and he's in love with me;
A nun I must be!**

**Stunned, perhaps a child's whim,
She questions me about "the man."
Oh! Mother, he died for me in love,
And it is so real - He wants me!**

**The caring nun said, "Just wait,
You must learn many things."
But Mother, why wait, as near His heart,
And in His arms - I'll grow.**

**He's so wonderful, loving and kind,
Surely everything, He must know.
I want to know Him more and more,
To be a nun, I must go!**

"Lucille, you are so happy, finish your school year, and I will inquire about your admission to the Noviciate," Mother pleasantly informs me, adding – "Besides, you will soon be back with your parents, who will help you."

Within a few days, she assures me that I am accepted at the training convent, if my parents agree. Silent concerning this matter, I zestfully complete my stay in Vegreville – with growing anticipation to be back home.

Precious fellow sojourner – let's span seventy-five years beyond our panoramic "Memoirs," and take our break together in my delightful sanctuary, within the family home – in Manitoba.

In passing, I acknowledge the power of Love (*Agape*) in true action in the restoration of an extremely severely broken marriage. After five years of melting and molding by the **Divine Potter**, before my eyes – they are walking sure-footed into being repairers of the breach and restorers of paths to dwell in. All this made possible through the Love of **"THE MAN CHRIST JESUS."**

After this fine refreshment served by Esther and Daniel, the couple just mentioned, let's cross over this three-quarter century bridge leading us back to "Memoir Lane."

Let's not be overwhelmed, since we are secure with **Our Escort**, **"Faithful and True,"** also called **"Faithful Witness."**

Scene 5 - A Taste of Heaven

It's July and I am back home in Winterburn. The mutual rejoicing and active recounting of each one's life events is somewhat altered for moments. "My" Bessie had to be shot as she broke a leg, caught in the plough, while she was frolicking.... Penetrating through it all, is my simple request, "Papa and Maman, I must be a nun to pay back Jesus. I love him, and he loves me, and he died for me – would you agree?" Maman answers softly, "my dear Lucille, you are still very young, but I am very honored. However, I assure you that God has a purpose for true marriages also. Besides, you need more teaching in this matter, we'll see...."

Papa interjects and calmly adds, "My little princess, I'll let you go, but be assured of our open arms and heart, if you must return." I'm so glad – what precious parents I have Emilia, who's treasure I've been, with "tongue-in-cheek," she brings in her bit.

“Well...Lucille, I don’t know about all that?” The encouraging and comforting words of our precious parents – to their faithful Emilia – favor a peaceful preparation for my departure.

The next three months, are most enjoyable! It’s harvest time. Hay making is especially delightful. Papa’s helpers are Maman and Emilia. Rosaire, eleven, and I, fifteen, offer our help, but we are privileged to either watch the operation or play in the hay. The noon-time respite, when people and horses come away from work and heat to be restored in the shade, a needed relaxation while having lunch and cold drinks, most valuable instructions are so casually poured out to myself and Rosaire. As I look back, what wisdom these adults had.

Now Emilia is in love, but in obedience to Papa, who is hesitant concerning her suitor, she is patiently waiting for his approval. In her tardy marriage to the one who also waited for her, she gives birth to three children, Esther, being the second one. When four years old, her mother Emilia dies of heart failure at the birth of her third child.

This loss is crucial, however, kind kinfolk and relatives help raise the two girls until the remarriage of their father to a brave widow with two children.

These two nieces today, I perceive to be fine women after God’s heart. Esther, being the youngest, is this pillar of steadfastness and dauntlessness. Together, for some 30 years, each in our manifold natural divergence, have been mightily and divinely buoyed through great, waste howling wildernesses. It surely is now so very clear to us, as we are being revealed the **“Kingdom Gospel”** – learning to live just like our King – letting go outward signs and going straight to the heart!

Scene 6 - On to Nunhood - Engulfing Portals

“All...aboard,” calls out the uniformed conductor. Within minutes, along with a jerk followed by regular clangs, we’re on

our way on a one hundred fifty mile ride south – “the convent,” our destination. It is a brisk, bright October morning, an unforgettable one for me – at last I’ll be a nun – “surely I must be getting closer and closer to you Jesus,” yet I want to cry when I think of my parents...my home.... It’s ok, because when there is love, nothing is really too hard – “show me Jesus how to love just like you love....”

Clutching my little satchel, I’m sitting by the window, admiring the golden leaves hurrying by and I muse, totally ignorant of the scenario. There are numerous passengers on this impressive train, among whom is a woman of distinction wearing a religious habit, yet she seems friendly with a young peasant girl. Of a small stature, this fifteen year old has short hair, banged across her forehead, wears a white blouse with a navy blue jumper, a royal blue coat, a brimmed royal blue hat secured under chin with a large royal blue bow, and pretty white shoes.

Surprisingly, it appears like a mother-daughter relationship, but it is real. Sister Superior is reading during my prolonged musing and fascination of the fast fleeting outside scenery. Her joyful, yet serene perception detects signs of invading despondency in her “brave-frail” companion. As we are drawing closer to the place desired, a fear of the unknown feels suddenly unbearable. Dear Mother, with a few casual reassuring words and a little refreshment from her handbag, does wonders for me, while deep within me resounds, “He loves me.”

My Fellow Sojourner, let’s leave that fast moving train to cross the seventy-five year old bridge of time and space for a short rest.

Truly, as witnessed in the natural, is it not unfathomable that the heart of a young maiden would be so enraptured by the drawing of an unseen, unknown persistent lover. Actually, this was the dawn of that “ongoing” mysterious “love operation” of my Beloved!

*Let's return to "Memoir's Lane," reembarking the train.
Arrival is at hand.*

Looms before us, a bare lonely hill, whereon stands an ancient grey convent – to me, it appears huge and desolate. Within moments we disembark our “faithful” vehicle that halts at the garden gate, a courtesy of the CNR. Since the train passes in the valley area of the nuns “property,” we must climb the hill.

Finally, we are at the impressive portal of the large convent, which for me would soon be transformed into a potter’s house for the use of my ***Beloved Great Potter***, to mold and kiln-dry his well-loved clay. Received by Mother Provincial, who is also called “Mistress of Novices” – along with a formal greeting request, “Follow me to the trainees quarter.” Mother (*Sister Superior*) and I follow, but at the entrance of that secluded area, we must part.

My precious, cherished “mother figure” speaks to me a few encouraging words and with her compassionate smile, she disappears. An uneasy, chilly feeling grips me as I am left alone with Mistress. Immediately, she proceeds to instruct me concerning the essential rules and regulations. Mistress pursues her instructions with an austere countenance, a stern diction and an absolute clarity concerning silence – blind obedience being of utmost importance. “Now Lucille, just wait here, someone will come for you for the evening meal – there, is a bed for you...” and she walks away. Numb and stunned I’m stamped with a fear and an uneasiness in her presence, which left me after thirty-five years of nunhood.

Sitting on the edge of my bed, I attempt to pierce through the situation, which certainly must be a “bad dream.” Anyway, I reason and question, “Jesus, Jesus! are you here? I really don’t understand...even if you are not here, your love for me is forever, and I’ve given my whole life to you alone. Please Jesus, help me to love just like you do.” Someone is here for me – I’m already less desolate.

*Scene 7 - Stark Grey Walls - Plunged Into
Religious Immersion*

The next two years of probation and intense religious formation, is a time of training to learn how to be a “good” nun. “Well, that too...just for the love of you Jesus....” Under the close supervision of Mistress, along with three other trainees, we are instructed to be very obedient to all the traditions and customs of the “Order,” especially “silence.” I set out to try very hard – I really want to become a “good” nun – yet I don’t know how to do this, and I’m puzzled: where is Jesus? – is there someone here able to talk to me about Him?

Somehow, it seems that I have a hard time to breathe. A general obscurity, the strange odor and no possible ventilation pervading the entire building is near unbearable to me. Little did I realize my lack of endurance. On the other hand, the weariness of grey walls seems to echo the chanting of the ritualistic Latin prayers three times a day. Then much time is allowed to the study of our “holy religion,” e.g. the two cults: that of “Latri” – devotion of Mary, and that of “Hyperduli” – God worship. By the end of the day, I’m so glad it is time to go to bed!

It is fall time, providing us a respite. Under constant supervision of Mistress, we the trainees gladly work at the garden clean-up and gathering leaves – enjoying the “fresh air”!!! Then comes the long winter months. I had plenty of healthy food and raiment, but extremely restricted washing facilities – then I knew the reason for unpleasant odor.

After a few months, I am afflicted with fainting spells, and a persistent rash on my face and neck. Medical care is reluctantly granted. It is the custom that an elderly nun treats “whatever,” in traditional ways. Her sincere endeavor does not relieve my aggravating condition. I plead for help from Jesus to be able to endure in silence. I must also obey the priest who said that I must

make many sacrifices for my sins in order to go to heaven when I would die. Finally in bed, I have so much to muse about with the man Christ Jesus who is so far away....

The curfew just rang – all is in complete silence. Flat on my back, hands under my head, at last I am relaxing with my knees well flexed, eyes closed, I pursue my musing. Sensing someone by my bed, I open my eyes – it's Mistress, shaming me severely for such a lustful position, then briskly walks away. Absolutely puzzled as to what she means, I turn on my side, curl up into a fetal position, to awaken with the morning bell at 4:45 rung loudly down the hallway near the dorms. The nun in charge of this "awakening," proclaims at each door, "Benedicamus Domino" (*Bless the Lord*) – to which each one is to answer promptly, "Deo Gratias" (*Thank God*), and be out of bed immediately.

At 5:15, everyone has to be in community room to recite the first canonical prayer in Latin, – "Laud" (*Praise*). Mistress leading all devotions insists on perfect intonation, pitch, pronunciation, unity, etc. If there should be any discrepancy, Mistress called for a halt, to bring forth a strong reprimand. Follows, "meditation, lecture, mass then breakfast. Eight o'clock – everyone at their work area – we trainees at study or sewing. The teachings are extremely wearisome, e.g. history of our holy mother, the Roman Catholic church, the only true one – the revelations of Marie d'Agreda concerning the miracles of Jesus as a babe in Egypt.

Mistress warns with great emphasis, "I must tell you that there is such a book called the Bible – it is very dangerous as some strong Catholics have left their religion to believe the teachings of that mysterious book!" At meal-time, while others eat, an appointed nun reads necrologies. This informs us in detail concerning the lives of deceased nuns. After the meal, someone reads a paragraph in the tiny book "Imitation of Jesus Christ." Somehow, I feel a sadness – it is as though I am trapped.

Letters home are scrutinized by Mistress to detect any revealing of our life in the convent. Perfect obedience forbids any questioning. Many nights, my head buried in my pillow tears are abundant while I “silently” talk to my dear Jesus. “Jesus, do you like this harsh secrecy, and all those rules and other things? Jesus, please comfort me.” Soon asleep to awaken with a new courage to keep trying to be good and brave in my “sufferings....”

My Fellow Sojourner, let's busy ourselves over and out of the “training time of this maiden,” barely out of childhood, to enjoy true freedom in Christ Jesus who loved us.

We have just seen a close up of the generational religious slavery to sin and death, especially since the era of the Dark Ages. I plunged deeply into the morbid situation of the “blind leading the blind.” So very, very sincere, this precious soul – “Mistress” is obviously deceived, being bound like millions of nuns before her – under the law of sin and death.

As we recall how in a special circumstance while I was in class, I was overwhelmed by **Christ's ineffable Love!** Unknown to me, that my heart had been sealed with **“Love that is strong as death.”** The wonders of Almighty God's operation to carry me through a waste-howling great wilderness unto the dawn of that glorious **“Feast of Tabernacles,”** that is, the mind of Christ is gradually over-ruling my natural mind. Born a slave-sold unto sin and death, I've been **purchased by my Saviour** - and now is soon coming the **fullness of redemption** – even my body shall be changed into the likeness of His own glorious body!

My patient Reader, we must return to the “Valley of the Shadow of death,” however, we fear no evil for we have “the Shepherd” – even so, our own “King!”

Scene 8 - Never to See Beloved Papa Again

In September of my second year at the convent, my father dies suddenly from heart failure. Mistress hands me the telephone. My brother tells me that our father is gone. “Oh...” shocked, I’m absolutely mute. “Say something! Don’t you even care?” this command and question from Mistress increases my overwhelming sorrow. However, she immediately gives me an option: “if you want to go and see your mother and family, go, but do not return, since you love your family more than your nunhood,” casually adding, “let me know tomorrow what you decide, go think it over.”

Slipping away to a garden bench, where no one knows where I am – at my feet are golden leaves...they’ve all finished their purpose to never return to the tree.... Suddenly startled out of my daze and heart-ache, I realize my dilemma, “Jesus! You are my only hope – the only one I can talk to...dear Papa died...I will not see him again. I really would want to see my mother, but I could not return to be a nun, so that I can love you more and more. Jesus, I know I must tell Mistress ‘I will stay.’ My greatest comfort is that you love me and I love you, Jesus.”

Arising with a new courage, I give my answer to Mistress who casually gives me permission to write to my Mother, if I care to. A spirit of mourning harasses me for many days. Within a week, I receive a letter from Maman, “Yes, my dear Lucille, your Papa and my loving husband is gone.... Let’s leave it all to God, and we must live on.... We miss you, my Lucille - Your Maman, and all us here.”

These few words bring me relief and encouragement. Not free to say much, I attempt to write a few words, telling her about Jesus – who loves so deeply. Surely, Maman, He’ll take care of you and I know that He loves Papa too. I really want to be faithful, yet I think of you a lot, Maman.... Your Lucille.

Gathering leaves and garden clean-up is quite a respite for all we trainees. Pushing my wheelbarrow full of leaves to be dumped

on the compost pile, I meet Mr. Langevin, our gardener of forty-five years old. Over enjoying some freedom, I greet him. Mistress is just behind the hedge. I am called to receive a severe reprimand, “Poor little girl...wanting man’s attention – how worldly....”

Scene 9 - Dreadful Retreat

There are a few more months of probation strewn with trying circumstances...and the two years will have come to an end. Then admission to nunhood or rejection from same will be decreed at the termination of a ten-day retreat. Rolling in my mind are envious thoughts, such as, what will I do during this time? What is the purpose of these days – a retreat? Above all, what will be the decree for me?

Mother Mistress calls Claire and I for private meeting with her. It is my turn, and I try to hide my fear of her, and take the religious composure I am expected to have, and am now waiting in her private office for her “verdict.” With her austere somberness she expounds, “Lucille, I am very weary concerning your admission in our midst – you are so immature. It really does not appear that you would be much of an asset to our Congregation. During this retreat, you must pray to Mary and ask her for a serious disease upon you, if you are not to be received as a nun in our midst – you are dismissed.”

With those words confirming my insecurity, I am now sick with fear. Again, down I go to the garden lane – alone in an open space, I begin my prayer session, “Jesus, I have to first tell you, I do not want to be sick – I’m yours, I just want to love you more and more – where are you Jesus? When will I see you?” I just know He heard me in His great love. Feeling much better, I take my place among some sixty nuns in the retreat room.

Due to lack of space, we all are in extreme closeness endeavoring to bear with the stifling August heat. The priest delivering his one and a half hour teaching is perspiring profusely. As for me, I can’t keep awake – yet I really want to learn the final directions to be

a “good nun.” With super effort, I manage to stop nodding, with the help of a nun poking in my back. Then I find myself gone fantasizing, basking in the delightful feeling of my hair blowing in the breeze while riding galloping Bessie. Suddenly coming to reality, I’m crushed with condemnation – “Mistress is right! I am very immature and worldly, yet Jesus I want to be a holy nun!”

Finally, listening to the teacher (*I recall something like this*), “... never forget the vow of chastity is the hardest to observe. Besides, you women are so very gullible. In spite of your religious garb, you are attractive and sometimes even enticing. Know that even impure thoughts are usually mortal sins leading to damnation. Confession to a priest – and if you deserve his absolution – you are forgiven....otherwise?”

Now, I am confused, “Jesus, is that teacher going to explain about love? Really I don’t understand, but I’ll keep on trying harder, I promise dear Jesus. I know you will help me!”

The session is over, and I must forget about a cold drink, since it is not allowed between meals. I slip away to the shade of the garden hedge for a “breather!” This ambiance permeates the ten days and finally the “annual retreat” is over!

ACT THREE.

Nun at Last – Jesus! Where are You?

Scene 1 – Three-Vow Pledge – Full-Fledged Nun

Early on the last day of the retreat, Mother Mistress calls Claire and myself to be vested with the nuns' habit – now I know that I am accepted – Mother guides us in fitting on a tight bonnet to secure the heavily starched coif – a floor length black woolen dress – a 3 ft. by 3 ft. white cotton material folded diagonally over the shoulders – a large waist length black veil, a black silky cord around the neck from which hangs a carved wooden crucifix on mid-chest.

Scene 2 – Threatening Prediction – I am Shattered

Well attired with this impressive (*oppressive*) garb, Claire and I, in great composure, follow Mother Mistress into the convent chapel where we will be the feature of this momentous ceremony. Therein pervades an absolute silence while some sixty nuns are seated motionless. My mother and Claire's relatives are attending seated in a back bench near the door. In the sanctuary stands the Priest arrayed in dazzling white and gold trimmed ceremonial vestments. We, standing before him, respond our well-rehearsed answers to a formal questionnaire (*a ritualistic list*) favoring the declaration of our willingness to undertake this mode of life. Then kneeling before the altar, in turn we pronounce as vowed unto God, the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. In this ambience of mysterious holiness we are now both full-fledged nuns of that Order.

Sister Martha



All is over! With pomp, the organ breaks forth accompanying the “mini” choir’s forceful joyous song of the “Magnificat” in Latin: that is, “My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour!” Meanwhile all Sisters gather in the anteroom to greet the new members. Mother Mistress leads her two nuns to their new religious family. My heart is glad with anticipation.

Mistress embraces Sister Claire, and ushers her with a wee smile, unto the gathering. Returning to me, pausing a moment and with an anxious stare, Mistress delivers in a low semi-chanting voice a “fateful” prediction: “You, Sister Martha, will be most ‘unfaithful’ to your holy vocation to nunhood, you even will leave with a man....” Taking the end of my fingers, with a “send away thrust” toward the stairway, she adds – “Go see your mother downstairs.”

Shocked and stabbed with what strikes me as a deadly destiny, a flood of tears breaks forth from a great deep for three days and three nights. I disappear promptly down the darkish stairway and pause in the corner of the first landing...extremely disheartened by the threatening warning, and trying hard to dry up my tears. “Jesus! help....”

In addition to the extra sorrow (*perhaps much self-pity*) at the joyful echo from my new religious family, condemnation sets in. “Jesus! Jesus! where are you? are you angry with me? You know, I was angry and scared when Mistress commanded me to pray to be sick...and I didn’t obey her...Jesus, I’m so glad you love me, even died for me.” A sudden release enables me and my abundant tears, to take a flight down the next flight of stairs to land in my Mother’s arms, as a child-speechless....

My precious Reader – spanning time and space, let’s enjoy a break, here in Manitoba. As we take some food, I’ll answer one of your interesting questions – “What did that kind of life have to do with nuns and your great desire to love and know your Saviour? I don’t understand....”

Frankly, explanation is not possible nor needed. After seventy-five years, I still do not understand – but I know that ***someone who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*** (Hebrews 11:6). Today, I am so very grateful for the setting prepared for me, by our Father’s loving wisdom.

At an early age, my heart was sealed with a seed of “Love strong as death.” Along with a glimmer of TRUTH concerning Jesus, He allured me into a waste, howling great wilderness....

Though I now greatly desire to expound on the ***Great and Marvelous works of the Lord God Almighty***, proclaim that ***just and true are His Ways***, I must forebear until we complete our sojourning in “Shadowy Vale,” exploring “wilderness years.”

Even so, let’s move on in good cheer!

Scene 3 - An Angel of Mercy - My Mother

Recently widowed, my fifty-six year old “Maman” heartily embraces me...her arms around my waist, and with her usual limp, she escorts me to the garden bench...mother is bewildered – I am shattered. In maternal gentleness, she sponges my tears with a special, folded and embroidered handkerchief. Knowing the “hard knocks” of life, thus deeply anchored in her Creator, she attempts some comfort to her seventeen-year-old Lucille, just transferred – a few moments ago – into a full-fledged nun.

Maman clasping my hands, she pleads, “My Lucille, tell me what that is all about”? Between sobs, I release some of my long-standing pressure. “Maman, I really want to be obedient...as a nun, I am forbidden to say anything about my life, or anything about nunhood, except to religious authorities.” With dauntless serenity, she ventures, “This time, my Lucille, just tell me about your great sorrow of heart, and together we’ll talk to God about this and to no one else.”

“Maman, I want so much to be faithful to Jesus I love...He loves me so much...” a few sobs, “and Mistress just told me ...that I’ll be an unfaithful nun, and...that I’ll run away with a man...someday.” Bursting this prediction, I lean my head on her shoulder, “a pillar of strength!” She continues unperturbed, hands on my hands, “My dear one, remember, you belong to Jesus – you love Him, and He loves you – be sure that God will fix it up somehow...just keep trusting Him.

Silent moments follow. Soon we find ourselves gazing at life-size statue in a shrine before us, a sad tearful woman holding the dead body of a man, a corpse severely bruised. Behind her is a large wooden cross with the inscription: Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews! At the base of the setting is engraved “MATER DOLOROSA” – mother of sorrows. Both of us are speechless.

Arm-in-arm, we return to the convent. It is nearing time for dear Maman to embark the train to return home. We stroll down to the darkish dining room. There, two congenial nuns serve us graciously a frugal refreshment.

Absolutely unable to subdue my tears, I accompany Mother to the “Portal.” My eyes fixed on the vanishing cab, they close as I lean over the huge cross bar of the door...the eerie sound of the loud whistling of the fast disappearing train favors within me a “day-dreaming session” – the cool breeze of the vast meadows back home, riding my galloping Bessie, but above all, the comforting tender loving strength drawn from courageous Maman. This reality stirs me out of a fantasy, awakening to a sense of duty and faithfulness, I re-enter the dark grey walled corridor. “For the love of Jesus” fills my being with a new courage and a kind of deep contentment never really experienced before.

Scene 4 – Community Life

Nearby, a middle age nun is waiting for me. After a hearty embrace, she escorts me down the long hallway, and as we slowly proceed, she explains amiably how she wants to introduce me to

our Sisters, adding reassuring words, “Sister Martha, I have been waiting for you, and I have been observing you for quite some time. I just know that you will be a good nun, knowing and doing what God has for you. Each one has a function – mine is first to live for God, then help the others to do so. I’m sure we’ll get along very well. Of course, there are very hard moments, but that’s life!” After greeting nuns in their work area, Sister assigns me to my room to rest until the next meal.

Comforted and reassured – tears less abundant – and with a deep sigh, I lay flat on my bed, arms outstretched. Staring way beyond the ceiling, even perhaps past the horizon, and there I muse within my struggled, frazzled soul, “Jesus, this nun is different – would she be able to tell me more about you? Anyway, right now, my only ray of hope is you, because you love me so much, and I’m a nun because the priest said that it is the best way to prove that I love you, with all my heart....”

A knock at the door, indicates that it is supper time – someone is waiting for me. Meals are a heavy duty for me. Mistress serves the main meal to each nun equally and it is always too much for what I need, and no one is allowed to be different. I finally realize that to become a “good nun,” I would have to go through “**conventionalization**.”

A part from meal time, there is a greater ease of living, as Sister Eugenie – the Superior – is indeed congenial and most encouraging. Mistress gives all assignments of work load and occupation to each nun.

Scene 5 – Nebulous Few Months

As for me, since I have only grade eight – I am given a few menial occupations such as sweeping and dusting the two long flights of stairs every morning, plus helping the nuns in various works. Amazingly, I am learning so much, and more so enjoying working at the very end of the building in the “fire escape stairway” – the thick steel-doors at the four levels offer me quite a freedom

to sing and to talk to Jesus. “I am so glad I’m all yours Jesus – even if I did this kind of work for the rest of my life....”

Annexed to the convent is a small hospital. After a few months, I am told to help wash the instruments in the operating room, and to assist at a birth which fills me with “awe!”

My Reader – finally the great moment of my life is over, I thought.... According to the priest’s counsel, becoming a nun was a sure means of getting to know Jesus who loves me and died for me. Also, as a nun I could expiate, that is suffer for my sins and then get to heaven with Jesus.

A few moments after my sincere dedication with vows to God, my joyous anticipation is turned to a heavy burden by Mistress predicting to me a future failure. However, rays of hope came from two valourous women: my mother and Sister Eugenie.

Soon, in “blind obedience,” young and unprepared I would fumble into a new endeavor – that is between life and death as a nurse in a hospital.

Today, I see Father God’s mighty acts in it all – Let’s return to “Memoirs.”

In my candidness, I had plunged head-long into three vows and unreserved oblation forever to an unknown “Lover” who had ***sealed my pardon by pouring out His soul unto death....***

Since I did not know ***this marvelous truth***, I fumbled and stumbled into another divine allurements which led me, seemingly, far beyond any preparation for the task.

Let’s return to Memoirs.

Scene 6 - Propelled into Full-Time Nursing

After a meal, Mother Provincial approaches me with a more than somber look, and gives an assignment that is precise and concise as to the place and departure, adding, “Do your best to help them for a while.” “Yes Mother, I will do my best.” With minimum baggage and information, I embark that memorable train that brings me to destination for a “while” – twenty-one years.

It’s a day’s voyage northeasterly, via Edmonton where I transfer for the last one hundred fifty miles stride. The winding rails separate the thick increasingly wearisome scenery of a pine-tree forest. We’re all cozy inside, lulled by the rhythmic clangs of steel to steel, while the Conductor is tactfully watching over this young passenger nun. As for me, even though my mind is “trotting” through my “highs and lows” concerning a contentment from being away from Mistress, yet what is awaiting me, and dusk is upon us – the Conductor announces – our rolling into the terminal, “Bonnyville!”

Somewhat stirred, I muse with quiet assurance, “It’s so wonderful to be yours, Jesus, and I just know that nothing is too hard for you. Your great love will always help me. Jesus, maybe this is where I’ll get to know you – even become like you – and then I’ll understand much better about love....”

Cordially received by Sister Superior – of sorrowful countenance – who offers me refreshment. While we partake together and converse, she seems oblivious of my youth – a proof of a lack of experience.... All I have to offer is, “Sister Superior, I’ll do my best to help anywhere.” “Oh! you’ll do well, Sister Martha...” and with these encouraging words comes the story – “Our precious twenty-four year old sister, Rosa, a nurse in charge, left her habit and escaped three days ago with a suitor.” We will ask you to take her place.” Rather baffled, yet I promptly assure her of my willingness....

Finally settled for the night, my mind is racing about the situation of the “escapee...ran away with a man....” Mistress’s ominous prediction re-echoes threatening thoughts, and fear is invading me...”Jesus! Jesus! now I’m afraid, but you care so much for me, I don’t have to be scared” – and I’m sound asleep within moments.

My precious Fellow Wayfarer, before we venture into a new phase in “Memoir Lane,” let’s soar into this present moment, to bask in the magnitude of Our Father’s presence.

In this span of seventy-two years in my quest **to know Jesus**, I experienced a great waste, howling wilderness, into which I was allured by **my Beloved**. Training for nunhood surely was the beginning of wilderness which after a short respite would accompany me in various degrees for some thirty years. That precious glimmer of truth buoyed me through my stumbling and fumbling in darkness of the shadow of death. At this moment, as I flow in **love, joy, and peace right from the heart of God**, I proclaim **His never failing faithfulness in loving kindness and His unpredictable wisdom**.

As we return to “Memoirs,” it will be a panoramic view of my nunhood infancy, running parallel with improvised full-scale nursing without supervision in the care of sick men, ten to twelve patients.

Let us pursue with courage....

Here I am, eighteen years old, a “baby” nun willing to help, I am simply assigned to the care of patients in this section of a thirty bed hospital. Dr. Sabourin, a sixty-two-year-old doctor gives me some twenty minute training and refers me to the phone, if I should need his help, then returns to his busy clinic. At the other end of that first floor is the administrator – Sister Mary Camila – who has been replacing the “escapee” for the last three days, and

is asked to instruct me concerning the essentials of the task. The extremely tired fifty-year-old woman seems frustrated about the whole situation, nevertheless, she endeavors to casually indicate where things are, such as the medicines, etc. As she seems in a hurry to go back to her own work, she adds, "Oh! there is some work to be done in X-Ray and Lab."

Standing alone, somewhat puzzled – wondering if it could be a bad dream, when just then Sister Superior is beside me with a few encouraging words, and a gentle reminder to be present at community prayers three times a day, adding, "Sister Bertha assumes night duty 8 pm to 8 am, you will take day duty from 8 am to 8 pm every day. However, you both are assured ten days a year for retreat time. We are considering the hiring of an aid, if you should need help" – and dear Sister slips away....

By this time, "bed-ridden" are in need, and bells are ringing – my nursing career is begun. I answer one call at a time. The era of antibiotics did not reach us until the 1950's, therefore, there were few medications to administer, but many very ill patients. Knowing nothing about nursing care, but truly believing there can be nothing too hard for the "love of Jesus," I embark whole heartedly, in total "blind obedience," in caring for the sick with less than minimal instruction.

To the natural reasoning, called common sense, this narrative as well as the ones to follow, seem to be chimerical, imaginary, unreal, absurd, impossible and even visionary – but I lived it! and in obedience to my divine mandate for which I am given an outstanding vivid memory, I pursue.

I must get acquainted with my patients. Here is young Pierre of nine, gasping for breath, with sharp pain in his heart and joints. He is in desperate need of relief. At the same time, Jim in the next bed, is entering a spell of convulsion caused by terminal Meningeal Tuberculosis – both need some Morphine now! In the other bed is fourteen-year-old Billy, in traction for thigh fracture requires physical care, but more relief for his exasperating mental

anguish. My first recourse is the Doctor's orders which I have to learn to read and carry out. Billy gets his cherished sleeping "pill."

Eventually, I find out the far reaching benefits of a "gentle touch," a kind encouraging "word," an appropriate compassionate "smile," but in the height of pressure, I fail so miserably, and fall quickly into the harassment of condemnation – "a killer." Finding a little corner, I pour out my aching heart, "Jesus! Jesus! I need you – it's so hard, but I know you love me, please help me to keep on...."

Sister Camila is looking for me. "Sister Martha, perhaps I should show you a few more things and help you for a few hours, then all is your full responsibility." As dear Sister casually instructs me how patients have to be served on trays from the food sent in pots from the kitchen, through the dumb waiter managed by a rope – this three times daily – and bed-ridden are to be bathed and bed linen changed daily, and medications given on-time, assisting the Doctor's visit to his patients, supplying him with a report on each patient – revision of new orders, etc., and there is the upkeep of the washroom and general housekeeping. Lab and X-Ray is minimum, but still must be done - and of course, don't forget chapel devotions....

Even though I can't seem to grasp what my work-load fully entails, I attempt to fulfill my duties "for the love of Jesus." Rather overwhelmed, yet candidly believing that this is normal, I begin to hasten into my nursing career. As I scurry, I muse "Jesus, your love for me is so great – you died for me, yet I know that you are alive – I will do my very best to take good care of patients and do all the work. For you, nothing is too hard because you can do all things to help those who love you!

The huge gong clock strikes 8 – time has vanished as a vapor. Though the dust balls assemble under the bed and on each side of the hallway – I've given some attention to each of my patients – but so much remains undone. Just then, Sister Bertha is beside

me adjusting her large white apron to begin her twelve hour shift. Tired and weary this sixty-year-old nun addresses me with what she suspects, “Well Sister Martha, I hope that your work is all done – it seems that the day nurse doesn’t complete her work around here.” Though it was like a dagger, I apologetically answered, “I’ll finish Sister Bertha.”

Scene 7 – Physical Exhaustion – Spiritual Perplexity

By 10 pm, I lay down my exhausted being. Instead of a much needed sleep, my mind runs wild.... “Jesus, I think of Sister Rosa surely she must have loved you to become a nun, but what really happened to her? Can she love you as much now?” Realizing the uselessness of my wonderings – sleep soon invades.

At 4:45 am, a loud bell is rung down the hallway near the dorms. The nun in charge of this “wakener” intonates at each door “Benedicamus Domino” – to which everyone must answer “Deo Gratias.” By this time, everyone attempts to be alert, as within a half an hour, we are to be at attention in the Community room. At a very special signal the chant of the canonical office begins the sequence of devotions for two hours, ending with mass. Then breakfast, after which all disperse each to their day’s task. As for me, being among the sick, regardless of the “heavy duty” required, seems to be a healthier atmosphere than the suffocating, deadening, and oppressive, ritualistic, religiosity.

During these morning hours, between moments of extreme sleepiness, I muse, “Jesus, I really want to be a faithful nun, but it is so hard for me to even talk to you during these times we call prayer – anyway, we really love one another, dear Jesus, and I continue in “blind” obedience because of love....”

Back to my work area, moving as fast and as efficiently as possible, the bed-ridden are more demanding and others quite ill have come in during the night – I am overwhelmed. Off on another tangent, “Sister Superior, please can I have some help?” Her pathetic reply is, “I know, Sister Martha, it has been very

difficult for a long time, but Sister Camila said that we must save the money to add an addition to our hospital – this is why we are unable to hire help.” Indignant, I retort, “Sister! and we can’t even take good care of the patients we already have.” Quietening myself, I quickly get back to at least deal with the essential needs.

Scene 8 - Old Country Doctor - Father - Teacher - Pillar

10 am, Doctor Sabourin is here, scanning the patients “report” since his last visit. “Sister Martha, did you not report yesterday,” he inquired a little perturbed, and before I can admit my failure, he pursues, “Anyway, Sister Martha, you have far too much work – I have to see Sister Superior!” In a moment, he’s gone...toward her office.

Within a couple of days, a fine eighteen-year-old maiden is hired. Her desire being to care for the sick, we labor together as amateur “night-in-gales” under the fine guidance of our “father-type” sixty-two-year-old Doctor. So very delighted with his helpers, we are considered “his gems.” Spreading ourselves thin, we are coping day by day, now with a little more than the essentials at our patients’ service, as well as a little cleaner hospital. Our success is to have them return home better than they came.

Before long, we discover that the X-Ray room is also an emergency room. One mid-afternoon, Doctor Sabourin comes from his Clinic with Mrs. Marshall who is sixty-five. She is already on the X-Ray table when Doctor calls June and me, “You two observe this well, while I proceed.” He administers a few whiffs of ether to his patient who gladly receives it. As she falls asleep, her belly apparently of term pregnancy goes absolutely flat. Soon awake, she exclaims, “I’m delivered, can I see my baby, Doctor?” In those days, in remote areas, the country Doctor had to be psychiatrists – He patiently works with this woman, along with her understanding husband and their ten offspring – in their own home.

The following day, the Doctor gives us the explanation. This is what the human mind is able to do if unbridled – she wanted desperately to be pregnant.

My precious Reader – let's arise for a brisk walk in the sunshine! Leaving "Memoirs Lane" where I was sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, holding fast to a beam of truth – "The love of Jesus who died for me" – to transfer into this present time and place. We will rest a while in a simple abode among men.

Here I abide – no more in darkness and in debt, nor in death, and no more a sinner, but of them who have been **quickened with Christ (by grace, now saved), even raised up together, to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus** (Ephesians 2:6)! Of course, this phenomenal work of the Holy Spirit can be understood by the "new creature" – a sinner whose nature is metamorphosed into that of a saint – now having the divine nature.

Not everyone requires the long "working over," that I did. However, it is worth it all, and even I am grateful to everyone who supplied fiery trials that favored my quest for **"Jesus who loves."**

Let's return to "Memoirs" where we are about to meet with momentous days.

Scene 9 – Instant Death – Heart Failure

Some fifteen months have elapsed in a frenzied activity. That morning, Doctor Sabourin is no more...he died at 5 am of heart failure. In our midst is indeed a great consternation. His corpse is removed, but his three precious dogs stay huddled outside of the Hospital, under the window of the room from where he left us. They did not budge, nor cease their howling for some three days and three nights – no one ventured to send them away.

A great mourning pervaded far and wide throughout the community, so deeply bereaved of their “hero” – a country Doctor having faced the pioneer days of his forty years of his dedication in the same locality....home calls in winter! As for myself, I am absolutely shattered – this, “a close up” of death, of which I am so terribly horrified – plus, I feel as a frail vine fallen down with an oak to rise no more.

These gruesome and disheartening thoughts are suddenly arrested by the recent instruction of our precious deceased, “See what a human mind can do when unhealthy thoughts are unbridled.” At that moment, the faint, fine intense “ray” of Real Life and Love, hidden deep in my heart dispels the “spirit of mourning” which causes such useless pain so closely associated with self-pity.

Scene 10 – General Consternation

Let’s return to that hospital, not only filled to capacity but permeated with desolation.... Here we are with no Doctor. The sick men are under the care of two teenage women, willing, but “untrained,” and in deep sorrow. We experience a great need for one another. As we proceed to announce to our patients their loss, a surge of courage and strength we receive from a couple of older men – who obviously were acquainted with more than a few hardships and disappointments. Pioneers with large families comforted us greatly.

Nearby is a small protestant hospital, and its attending Doctor accepts to take the medical charge of our hospital as long as needed. Somehow, there has been a long existing feud between Catholics and Protestants – the cause, I never really knew, nor did I investigate. Doctor McTavish’s kindness and dedication in our midst became evident, even so that from then on, this conflict is mightily resolved.

Within a few months, two Catholic doctors arrive. These medical middle-age men with their families settled well in

Bonnyville, and courteously supplied their services to the fifteen-bed hospital – giving Dr. McTavish a break. This valiant “woman” had most outstandingly met the challenge....

Observing all this, while constantly serving in such a “close-up” manner, becomes another “eye-opener” in my destiny. My scope of vision concerning the Protestants is mightily broadened. Through it all, furtive fifty-year-old Sister Marie Camila is standing beside me, weeping bitterly. “What is it, dear Sister?” I plead, as I turn – from setting trays in the little kitchenette – to hear her out. “Sister Martha, you have no idea how hard it can be...” her voice waning into sobs.... Speechless, I advance to hold her hand – she turns sharply and slips away.

Left dumbfounded – even oblivious of my pending work-load, my mind races off in unhealthy reasoning. Sister Rosa might have been hurting also...now Sister Julia is distressed, seeking something. “Jesus, maybe they didn’t know how much you love them....” I have an ache in my heart – I want to comfort my Sister. Just then, a fury of condemnation, lust and discouragement assail my poor soul – I am so afraid....

A meaningful call stirs me out of this mixed-up torment. “Sister Martha! where are you? I need your help.” Promptly answering Dr. Ayotte transfers me into another section of suffering humanity. Back to work with a vibrant Doctor in the midst of my patients seems to relieve my perplexity.

A few days after, I unexpectedly pass by the administration office – I am stunned to see Sister Camila in a hearty embrace with Bill, one of our employees. I immediately report this to Sister Superior, hoping she is able to rescue our Sister, I consider in trouble. “Sister Martha, you are very young, do not start tattling on your Sisters,” is her stern rebuke. Quietly returning to my work, I muse in bewilderment, “Jesus, I can tell you anything – did I imagine this? is it a bad dream? anyway, I must know you much, much more. Jesus, there’s so much I could learn from you....”

ACT FOUR.

“Dim Flicker” in Waste Howling Wilderness

Scene 1 – Escapees: Parish Priest and Another Hospital Nun

Days go by seemingly as usual, but within the week our Sister has escaped before dawn with the gardener. The well-known taxi driver reports, “I stopped as I recognized Sister Camila with Bill, and I could not continue – they escaped in the field.” The Sister’s refusing Official’s request to return to make things right, results in that within months, her corpse is found in Bill’s shack....

My Fellow Wayfarer, let’s come away, far away from the scenario of tumble-weeds, fumbling, stumbling and groping blindly at a wall in utter spiritual darkness – as afore mentioned, in the generational curse of sin, death and religion.

But oh! the wonders of that tiny **“Beam” of truth, “Who”** rescued me during these thirty-five years of nunhood. It has been as a **divine “ember of Light, Life and Love”** flickering powerfully in times of impasse, where only **God had an answer** – a wilderness indeed, so very needed to train me to eventually **walk in love, rather than head knowledge....**

Let’s return to Memoir Lane to lay it bare as the Master said.

Scene 2 – I Fumble, Stumble and Mumble

Once again, we nuns are plunged into shame, doom and gloom, with fear slowly breeding despondency. Sister Superior, exceedingly burdened asks June and I to take charge of the basic work of administration, temporarily. Doorbell – desk call bell –

telephone calls – settling account of discharged patients – others needing admittance, these being the essential work there, but our willingness leaves so much to be desired.

Moreover, there is a rumor – “Surely there must be a ‘wicked spirit’ in our Catholic hospital” – Doctors are becoming grouchy, many of their patients refuse to be admitted here. There with-all, young priest runs away with an eighteen-year old Catholic girl from his parish. Within days, Sister Maria, seventy, is here to assume administration without training, but is very honest. Past fraud and embezzlement is discovered – charging government for Native patients some extra days of hospitalization.

June and I are now back to only the previous occupation, pressing on with manifold duties. June has truly proven herself to be a woman of valour. To me, she is like another Florence “Nightin-gale” – surely she will be with us indefinitely.... Within a few weeks, she announces her wedding date in the near future. A new zest for life and an impressive, exuberance animates my co-worker. Her nursing days are counted, and she is rejoicing greatly to enter family life.

As for me, a wave of sadness creates ambivalent feelings of hate and love – my whole being is in a conflict. Hard to admit, but I am “jealous....” In great soulish distress of forever deprived of a husband and children, is becoming unbearable, and gruesome thoughts arise, “Do I have to continue in such bedlam situations? What is nunhood all about anyway? Do I have to be at the service of the sick and the dying all my life...?”

In the midst of such despondency and dejection, surges from deep within my being – that ***gleam of Light – that breath of Life and that flame of Everlasting Love***. I arise from the dungeon of “self-pity” experiencing an unexplainable soothing of my aching heart.

Just then, we are both snapped out of our divergent emotions by a great commotion at the main entrance. Severely injured

are being carried on improvised stretchers. It is the result of a horses' run-away with six school children and the driver. All were thrust out violently and injured – fractures – hemorrhages, some screaming with pain and fear. This is somewhat overwhelming, however, first things first!

The old non-shock proof X-Ray Unit is functioning to capacity. I am operating the manual switch controlling the fluoroscopy - Doctors reducing fractures. As I come too close to X-Ray tube, I am electrocuted – no breath – no heart beat – flat on the floor – however, with the Doctors' diligent action and the resuscitation, I revive. Though weak and in a daze, I am escorted to rest, to resume activity as soon as stability returns. Contending with a few side effects and weakness makes me sluggish. “Jesus, it's hard but because you love me, nothing should be too hard,” I muse, endeavoring to shake myself out of a tenacious listlessness.

The work-load is considerably increased with these seriously hurt patients. Physical pain is dealt with by sedation, but anxiety and “fear of death,” truly is the main problem.... By no means am I able to succor them, as the “fear of death” has plagued me since childhood, and increasing in this lustful nun.... June, our delightful ‘Nightingale,’ has just terminated her nursing services, with a radiant anticipation concerning her promising marriage.

Alone again, until help arrives, I am scurrying about to get done “sub-basic-care” of my patients. Several days go by, and in spite of my business, my mind is often fluttering about this lovely wedding. At a moment, something like a sharp arrow steers my emotional state into another direction. I muse with an unusual contentment within, “Jesus! your love for me is so intense, you died for me and somehow I know you are alive again. I really don't understand...but I am so affected by June's joy and fulfilment in this loving a man and being loved. Tell me Jesus, what is love? I find myself desiring an earthly husband and a family, could I not have loved you as much Jesus? please help me...”

I'm called to the main entrance. There is a radiant nuptial couple – June's sparkling eyes, filled with tears of joy, says it all. We embrace, then she presents to me Arthur, beaming beside his "treasure" - words are quite futile in the circumstance. June and Arthur are on their way in their modest vehicle, as I gaze at this "marvel!" – union for life, in love!.... "Jesus, someday, I want to know love your way."

My Reader, let us soar away from "Memoirs" for a little break and refreshment in this oasis of quietness and peace.

The blessing of this wonderful spiritual atmosphere in this modest rustic home is the ***Presence of Almighty*** in a very intense manner – this we desire at all cost! Surely, it has not always been this way. Born, not only under the curse of Adam – sin and death, but I am the offspring of an added curse which is ancestral.

Over a millennium ago, deceived ones replaced the truth with erroneous damnable doctrines – organized religious clergy rose up with great pomp of outward demonstration – having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof (*from such, I turned away*). Horror and terror followed – not only did this clergy beguile precious and unstable souls, but domineering them, they also formed armies to massacre their adversaries (*crusades, etc.*).

Sufficient be this brief sickening panorama – but I know, with hard experience, that ***deliverance from this utter darkness and religious slavery along with our translation into the Kingdom of the dear Son of God, is possible only by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!*** Going through several great and howling wildernesses, I now realize how needed it has been to humble me, to prove me, and know what was in my heart – whether my love for my Redeemer was real. Would I persevere in following my Beloved to Calvary, which means aloneness – betrayal – surrender – forgiveness and sacrifice, before resurrection?

Our God is a consuming fire! Blessed are they that have not seen, yet have believed God who is that fire, ***the Great Refiner*** – indeed to clean so much dross present with the silver of this great salvation. These long tedious years of heavy trials went on without understanding what was happening, but in trusting a God I didn't even know. How I admire with gratitude His love and mercy to have brought me this far, with assurance that He will finish the work begun in me.

Now, I know that ***the Lord God Almighty will bring forth to His Heart, the vilest sinner*** – and when out of his chains, he too will know the glorious liberty of the children of God. Let's rejoice! ***Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil*** – this includes all the lies, making people so sad....

Let's return to Memoir Lane.

Scene 3 - Suitor Paul - Mutual Attraction - Proposal

Yes, indeed, these new Doctors, Ayotte and Yelle, are very well liked. They are experienced medical men, requiring greater activity in every department. The sad ordeals of late have somehow vanished, but there are changes and readjustments necessary.

That summer, both Doctors decide to hire a young medical man, and leave together for two months. A fine young lady is my new helper, but for now, I am really in charge of the unit, including dealing with the twenty-four-year-old Doctor – a handsome gentleman.... His dedication, courtesy and even medical expertise is soon renown, and there is an inflow of patients from far and wide. June and I are extremely busy, yet the congeniality of Doctor Paul eases our task tremendously.

Day after day, I experience quite an attraction toward this gentleman, who is extraordinarily courteous and deferent towards me. Weeks roll by. Doctor Paul visits all his patients twice a day. It is understood that the nurse accompany every visiting Doctor.

Though we both remain very professional through these frequent “togethers” – no undue words exchanged, but somehow I’m concerned about my heart throbs and heart-warmings, even in his absence. More often than ever I muse, “Jesus, help!” Finally I reckon, “all will be over – he’s leaving in a few days....”

It is a day as usual so far, when during our touring the wards, Paul requests a special kit for an examination. I promptly leave to fetch the kit from an isolated service room – he follows me. As I reach for that kit, he tenderly encircles my shoulders and draws me to his chest, immediately venturing his proposal, “Sister Martha, I really love you...would you consider leaving nunhood to marry me?” My heart melts, and for a moment, inert and speechless in his partial embrace, my hand lands gently flat on his chest. Though I desire intensely to flow along with his delightful proposal, a precise and clear response came forth, “Paul, I love you too, but I’ve promised to God for life – do not wait for me....”

As I disengage myself from his loving arm to walk away, here comes another plea, “My dear, can I at least have a light kiss....?” “No, no Paul...that would never do...” is my painful, but definite and meaningful declining, as I immediately vanish from his presence. Having never experienced such a depth of stir in my heart and soul, I withdraw in an isolated setting to talk to Jesus about this “never-known-drawing! Deeply comforted and reassured of “His Love,” I went about fulfilling my nursing duties, dealing with the two Doctors now back home. However, for the next twenty years, I would frequently be harassed by fierce lustful vivid imaginations and even dreams of a completed marriage.

After 20 years, the stabbing attacks are not only becoming more acute, but now the priest, overburden with my frequent confessions, tries to settle me with a quick solution, “Just go ahead and marry that man since you are so passionate, or I’ll have to refuse you absolution. In my desperation, I attempt to fit in Catholic Charismatic gatherings.... There an elderly woman privately explains a vision she had for me, “A man, living on the

River Bank at a very definite address, loves you – he stood holding his suit coat open showing his heart to you.” This frightens me and causes me to cease going to Charismatic gathering, yet I continue ever more intensely my quest for, “***The man Christ Jesus! who died for me*** – what is this love really all about....?”

My Fellow Wayfarer, here we are, having leaped over several years of “Memoir Lane,” propelled by the intensity of such a momentous decision, opening wide a sequel of harassments concerning this “reluctant” declining of human love – and this for some twenty-five years.

Now, I know that my ***Everlasting Lover*** had gently allured me into the wilderness, a needed time of preparation. There He spoke comfortably unto me. Indeed, I needed the ministry of “***The Shepherd***” to eventually bring me to lie down safely. ***He betrothed me unto Himself*** – forever in faithfulness. I finally arrived at ***knowing Jesus as Saviour and Lord***. With His Spirit into my heart, I now cry, “***Abba Father!***”

Moreover, the ***Kingdom Good News*** – this Kingdom is at hand, and the main reason for me to live on is indeed to get to ***know Jesus Christ as my King***. Even, while learning Kingdom life with its refining fires, I experience fullness of joy and pleasures unknown to carnal existence. It is absolutely infathomable what is reserved for all who love Him.

Precious Reader, let's return to the panorama of the last twenty-five years of my struggle, groping desperately, sandwiched between trying harder and harder to be a “good nun,” and heavy duty nursing the sick constantly improvising. Excerpts will lay bare how in my exasperating condition, I was seeking for a refuge for my soul....

Back to my particular “Memoir of dark ages....”

Scene 4 - New Assignment - Maternity Ward

Circumstances are such, that my new assignment is the Maternity Ward – and it is the era of the “baby boom....” At the other end of this second floor is “pediatrics” – overflowing with sick children, and, of course, the nursery with its ten to twelve newborns.

Amazingly, I am instructed by Sister Superior to attend a “marriage convention” before I start this new endeavor – “You will leave tomorrow for the city, to return after five days. Your trip is all organized.” Though this is absolutely foreign to me, I am trained to please God. I must do all that religious “superiors” tell me in “blind obedience,” without a question. This would be resisting God, then rate me as sinners.

At the convention, here I am, the only nun among a great number of married and single Doctors and Nurses, listening to some “specialist” expounding on minute details of marital state – its snares and victories, its pleasures and its sorrows....etc. Somehow, I am quite at ease, gaining much information, which would be most appreciated in my interaction with my next group of patients.

Precious Co-Wayfarer, let's pause a moment right here on Memoir Lane. Tell me, am I dreaming? am I a nun? am I a puppet? would I be a hypocrite? who am I?

Really, there is only ***one who truly comforts me.*** All I know is that ***His name is Jesus***, and that He loves me, and I love Him, but ***I don't know Him, do you?***

please tell me as we walk on....

As we move on toward our new panoramic setting I muse, “Well Jesus, until you give me more direction, I'll continue blindly to do my best and try harder every day.”

Now here is Theresa – another twenty-year-old untrained “gem,” who loves her patients and doing wonders, with the help of the Doctors’ willingness to guide and instruct. Ignoring the overwhelming task ahead, I experience an indescribable joy welling up within my being, as Theresa introduces me rapidly to my domain of endeavor. Life and Love flash before me as soft Light rays. New lives springing forth – loving mothers being delivered – opportunities for me to give a word of encouragement or at least of acknowledgement to so easily ignored husbands and fathers, and very special privilege for me to care for newborns and children. Upon thinking this over, I realize how demanding it may be, but I muse, “For the love of Jesus who DIED for me – surely nothing can be too hard.”

Just when we’ve completed our tour, there is a call from the admitting office – a nurse quickly, here is a woman in advanced labour. Theresa prepares the delivery room, while I’m at my first attempt to assist a mother in labour. With a few needed halts, we arrive just on time. Theresa receives the babe from the Doctor’s hands. His vigorous cry reassuring everyone. After presenting him to his mother for a hearty kiss, he is laid in a close-by warm bassinet. The work completed, Doctor greets his patient and disappears. Maman, ready for a good rest is rolled onto a comfortable bed. All is over within half-an-hour.

Theresa wipes her brow, “Sister Martha, this case is a cinch,” but not all mothers have it that easy! I’ve assisted many, and I’m still very amazed at every birth. One thing is always sure, a mother will inevitably be delivered from whatever she has conceived. Few and far between are the unusual labours, but very few are as easy as this one.” Interrupting abruptly her vivid sharing, Theresa realizes the work out there is awaiting us.

In that era, mothers are bed-ridden for at least six days, requiring lots of care. Hired workers are on a nine hour day schedule – six days a week, while the nursing nuns work twelve hours a day – seven days a week, with few exceptions and retreat

ten days a year. At times, becoming very tired, I withdraw alone somewhere for a bit of water, a few deep breaths and I am able to continue.

Scene 5 - Trying Harder and Harder

Where are my great visions of endeavor – in joyful service and encouragement to my surroundings? Days, months, and years move on and now my musing concerning: “Jesus, His love – my love....?” is bordering on despondency, while trying to “try harder” every day. Moreover, Theresa and I are overburdened by Government Official being alerted to “non-professional” in full charge of patients.

As for me, I’m heavily desperate concerning - “how long will I have to lead this kind of life to make enough sacrifices for my sins? Jesus, you seem so far away – do you really care for me?” The work-loads are increasing, and we two are now skimming through our manifold duties day by day. Lost in my bewilderment, I begin my musing again: “Jesus! something is wrong here...please show me what to do. I really want to continue to obey, but surely there is more to your dying in love for me, than this....” Alerted, I click back into my sphere of work; that is my usual scurrying among the needy....

To me, this assignment is an awesome challenge. No routine nor rituals involved. As I see it, it is a matter of drawing on all the natural abilities and ingenuity within to be at the right place to meet the greatest needs, complying to medical direction. Once in a while I make room to be with the nuns.

Faithful Wayfarer, we are now entering sort of an oasis. I see it as a respite in our tedious journey. As we rest here, I’ll express something which seems almost a paradox, which is ever becoming more evident.

Daily endeavoring to give tender and diligent care to my patients, and as you noticed, it is appreciated. Being addressed, at times, as another “Florence Night-in-gale”

leaves me unmoved, because I am so overwhelmed with my quest: "Who is Jesus? Where is He? What does he want of me? and when can I meet Him? I love Him." Really, all else seems secondary to me....

Just recently, I heard a song on a patient's radio: "...my heart was distressed...down in the pit where my sins held me down.... I cried to the Lord...and he answered...then I'll sing of love...." Really, I wish I could hear it again.

Anyway, let's be on our way....

Several months have gone by when I am called to the convent. It is for the farewell of our Superior of seventy, and the introducing of Sister Cecilia who is appointed to that office. We receive her as our new Superior. Deeply religious and an instructor of nurses, she is well qualified, according to higher authorities.

As she tours the hospital setting, her keen bright eyes and kindness brings us much encouragement, but also action. Within a few days, there is a Nurse's-Aid and a housekeeper hired to help us. She tactfully acknowledges our dedication. Theresa and myself are so very thankful and cordially express so to her. Working hours are reduced – nursing care improved and I am able to partake more in the nun-family life. After fifteen years, I begin to explore nunhood in its various facets - I have a few questions.

Three most interesting years are before me. I now have moments with intimate communication with Sister Cecilia – I have long standing questions concerning the essence, the purpose, and the outcome of our mode of living. Of course, I vividly remember the initial teachings of religious clergymen and women which I had found to be stifling and fear generators. However, perhaps this woman might have relief for my aching soul. What I know now is:

- a. *dedication to codes – rituals – outward formalities;*
- b. *trying to appease an angry god, by sacrifice, ascetism; and*
- c. *preparing for death with hope to avoid eternal damnation, and finally get to heaven after burning in purgatory for a while.*

Here we are, two well-meaning women, and myriads of others, fumbling in utter darkness. Now my one main question I ask, craving for answers to my burdened life, “Sister Cecilia, what do you say is the reason and purpose of us being nuns?” She responds in a very adamant tone, “You must understand, Sister Martha, that we are holy virgins and under the protection of the Virgin Mary. Also we must live to the glory of our congregation.” Dumbfounded, “Oh!” comes with a sigh, and I retreat to an isolated area of the convent; “Jesus! where are you? Was my question too pertinent? Did Sister feel threatened?”

While my mind is racing in one direction, I spy out the phonograph. Beside it, a record that a protestant woman gave us. We are not supposed to delve into protestant songs or teachings – I get it playing as I have nothing to lose anyway....

**Where could I go, Oh! where could I go?
 Needing a refuge for my soul;
 Needing a friend to save me in the end;
 Where could I go, but to the Lord?”**

by J. B. Coates

An unusual peace floods my soul – tears flow – soon I am on my knees, face to the floor as though a “**love power**” bowed me there. There is a new hope and a secret joy rising in my weary soul – even a zest for life, never experienced before.

Back to nursing. I have a new interest in my patients. It seems as though a chunk of “self-pity” has disappeared, broadening my

ability to share the joys and sorrows of others. Mothers going home with babes and others coming in for delivery – diligent caring of sick children, etc., etc. – in humanism in full sway. However, pervades within, the question, “Why...what is my life all about?”

Now arrives a four-year-old with a broken arm. Doctors will reduce the fracture and apply a cast in an hour. Since Theresa is already overwhelmed, Billy is my patient. His mother leaves him with me and disappears. Billy is angry and threatens me, “I hate you, I’ll kill you,” repeating it constantly until the sedation ordered is effective. The procedure is soon over and the child begins to awaken. I am at his bedside, “I hate you, I’ll kill you,” is his recital. Holding his hand, I’m experiencing something very interesting as I gently speak, “Billy, I love you, I’ll take care of you.” He finally opens his eyes which have an angry glare and he repeats what is on his mind, and finally goes back to sleep.

The next day, he is walking about and coming to me, he tries to encircle me with his arm expressing his present thoughts, “I want to be like you.” I respond, “But Billy, I’m a nun and a woman and you are a little boy to become a man.” Billy insists, “I want to be a man-nun.” Spontaneously, I bend down and embrace him, attempting to distract him, I say to him, “Billy, your Mom is coming shortly to get you,” and off he went to the toy box.

Noella (*our Nurse’s-Aide*) comes running down the hallway holding a newborn by the feet – the babe is swinging upside down. His nurse is calling desperately, Sister Martha! he’s not breathing. Sure enough, he is blue. “Hold him!” I stated. Compressing his tiny chest between my two hands – I do what comes to me at the moment and by the grace of God the babe begins to breathe. Soon we hear a desperate cry. All is well – he soon regains his normal color.

Cuddling him with a snuggling of security, I walk quietly to Mom’s care for the rest of the comforting, also for the reassurance of other alarmed mothers. Yes! I had to improvise, but also, renew

instruction to Noella concerning using the aspirator-resuscitator machine always handy in the nursery.

The Maternity Ward, therein, seems to be a constant sense of anticipation. Mothers with a great variety of confidences, as well as silent bewilderments...I will mention a few occurrences among manifold others that brought me ever deeper into the mystery of mankind's destiny ("Jesus, where are you in all this – surely someday I'll know).

A twelve-year-old girl is escorted just inside the hospital door, and left in our care, in great fear, alone, she really is in need of help. Frantically complains of severe pain in her "belly" she obviously needs the delivery room. The Doctor arrives just on time to receive an eight-pound healthy baby boy. Passing him on quickly to the nurse, he deals with a severely hemorrhaging "baby mother." Finally, the bleeding is stopped, but the severely damaged immature birthing passage needs intense surgical repair. Unwilling to speak about her situation, she is seemingly oblivious of what happened. The babe is listed for adoption which readily occurs. I cannot recall what became of this mother.

I am privileged to receive another mother well advanced in labour with her tenth child. Marie-Claire married at fifteen to an accomplished farmer of thirty, Joseph. This is some fifteen years later. Radiant, quiet and peaceful, fully knowing "labour business," – baby boy is here. Crying effectively not only to expand his lungs, but an evidence of viability, reassuring all of us!

The next scenario is more than impressive! To me, it appears as an unusual family harmony. Marie Claire, comfortable in her bed with her newborn at her side. Joseph sitting at the head of her bed with a toddler on each knee, holding her hand. They are conversing while the other seven offspring are lined up around the bed as a "living crown." Raymond, fourteen, their oldest is absolutely exuberant over his new little brother.

I've come to check my patients, but turn to withdraw in respect for such intensity – Marie-Claire calls me, "Sister Martha, let

me tell you what Joseph just asked me. If we were back fifteen years ago, would you Marie Claire say, Yes I do! And I answered, in truth, Joseph I would want it no other way.” I agree, “How wonderful,” and withdraw. “Jesus! you know it all.”

Having noticed their teared-eyes sparkling and their countenance aglow, appear to me as “search-lights” gleaming in the night sky. What fearless courage and enduring love! – a marvel in utter darkness....

Scene 6 - New Challenge - Night Duty Four Years

This hospital has been many years with unusual nursing service due to untrained personnel, and now even though nothing has changed except more adequate help, all is moving on smoothly. However, the Health Officials bring forth a decree. “Only qualified (*with registration*) is to be in charge of nursing care.” Two young Registered Nurses (R.N), Miss Gendron and Miss Valois, arrive promptly from Quebec. One replaces me, and the other is assigned downstairs to the care of sick men.

Sister Cecilia proceeds in giving a jolting assignment. “Sister Martha, we ask you to take on night duty, 8pm to 8am, with a helper. Also to complete grades nine to twelve by correspondence. Then you will go to a nurses training school for three years to qualify as a R.N.” Once more, somewhat dumbfounded, for a moment...then, I simply agree, “As you say Sister Cecilia,” then I disappear to recover from this shock....

My poor mind has gone wild with anger – with furious thoughts – “why study now? Why was it not assigned to me when I was seventeen?”and what nonsense to spend three years in a nursing school after ploughing my way through for some twenty years in intensely active care of the sick!” It is unexplainable, but while these thoughts flash in my mind- something peaceful resounds in my heart. “...but for the love of Jesus – nothing, absolutely nothing can be too hard!

Though still torn apart between willingness and furious hateful rebellion – I drop face down on my bed battling morbid thoughts such as “surely I am insane..., yet I still talk to Him! “Jesus! I am all mixed up again – it has to be insanity...but you must love even the insane...” He must have put me to sleep, as I suddenly awake with peace and deep gladness – even experiencing a new courage to undertake the new task.

The marvel of such a quick transformation, assures me that **my “Lover” is truly alive and Almighty**. This divine intervention – though unknown to me then, had sealed within my inner being, a quickening of **the “power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering...”**

On “nights” with an aide, my responsibilities are: overseeing this tiny world, cared for in a sixty bed hospital, be in readiness to deal with emergencies within or incoming, tending laboring mothers, and press on with my correspondence lessons. After four years, I obtained Senior Matriculation, but with much struggle. Alert when active, but sleepy and lethargic when studying. The intricacy of the two last subjects, Mathematics and Chemistry, became “toughies” for me. It’s all over, and I am able to see daylight again!

Sister Cecilia acknowledges my efforts and graciously suggests that I take a few days of rest while preparing my meager belongings for my departure. How I appreciated this time to meet with each of my sisters – a heart-to-heart candid conversation. Oh! those precious women, so very sincere, but seriously deceived exactly like myself.

In a few days! For the love of Jesus, but with much soul struggle, I’m on my way to the Nurse’s Training School!

Scene 7 - Off to Nursing Training School

There are three main challenges before me, the tediousness of learning basics of nursing and complying to ritualistic traditions

of patient care. Secondly, working in close proximity with Dr. Paul stirs within me 'love yearnings' of seventeen years ago, more so after someone casually mentions, "Such a fine man...puzzling that he never married..." Hopefully unnoticed, I slip away to deal with my secret, vain, doubtful disputation, "Jesus! Jesus! could I have not loved you as much if I had married Paul?" Oh! the faithfulness of an ***Eternal Lover...who loves indeed***, as I soon experience peace and sound thoughts, deep, deep within me.

The third training session is two months among the insane within a Psychiatric Institution as I perceive it; a building wherein is concentrated unpredictable complexity of human minds. The Registered Nurses are trained for a short time in this area, in order to have more understanding of their patients' behavior, when there appears signs of psychoses or/and neuroses.

Fellow sojourner, let's halt for a few deep breaths, before we face "Memoirs" of intricacies. Let's thank God for a sane mind.

Let's go back to Memoirs.

I was absolutely shocked when I came to the Provincial Complex – several buildings far in the fields harbouring some seventeen hundred insane men, women and young people. My assignment is Building #9, where I am the only female, under an alert male supervisor, a psychiatric nurse caring for thirty insane men. I am to interview each one, and submit a report of what I detect to this supervisor. One is most intriguing....

Here is a forty-two-year-old, handsome, prime and proper man. He goes to do dishes, sweeps and spends long hours typing efficiently. My question is "Sir, please tell me, why you are here?" "Well you see," he calmly replies, "I have set fire to my own house and I enjoy so much to see the flame – two homes in a short time – kind of dangerous for my wife and children. Being here keeps

me away from all ignitors.” Thanking him for his cooperation, I slip away realizing, “I have so much to learn.” This work is so puzzling, could it be the work of the devil?

There is a lapse of time between the result of the exams and the graduation of successful ones. This is a well-deserved holiday for these young women. As for me, nunhood continues, and I am assigned back to Bonnyville, where, with a nurse’s aide, I am directed to work a twelve-hour shift, caring for this three-year-old boy in strict “isolation.” He is very ill with infectious hepatitis, extremely deadly and contagious.... After several weeks, he has recovered reasonably and is discharged. I continue helping where needed. Very reluctantly, I comply to the request of my presence at graduation, as my heart is deeply drawn elsewhere, that is discovering the purpose of my life.

Scene 8 – Deathly Ill – Three months

Three months later comes another assignment. Sister Jeanne about sixty years old has been doing Lab and X-Ray work at the tiny hospital annexed to the large grey convent, in Trochu. This quiet, pleasant, weary woman has requested the dispensation of her vows, to leave nunhood and marry her cousin, her long-standing desire...as she graciously acquaints me with her “little” work load, she shares what she sees an answer to her weariness and deep yearning of soul. “I heard that my cousin is sick, he is alone and is asking for someone to be with him. Besides, I’ve always wished I could marry him, and all is arranged for me to leave tomorrow.”

What is there to say except a heart-felt appreciation, “Dear Jeanne, you have been so helpful to me in many ways in the past as well as now. Farewell,” as I embrace her to receive a “bland” response...with a note of dreariness in her tender eyes. One more nun is slipping away from the commitment in her youth. As I stood alone, so very “fatigued,” I quickly sat on the Lab stool near the microscope. Leaning over the table, my head on my wrists,

I wonder, “Jesus! Jesus! what is it about? Truly what hope do I have, but to someday, know you who loves me so much?”

Just then, Dr. Hay is beside me, a man of few words, but he has one question, “Are you not well, Sister Martha, could I prescribe something for you?” “Not now, Doctor, I’ll just take a good rest tonight,” is my response. Unable to eat, I retire early, to immediately fall asleep. The three-month incubation period is over, and down I am, afflicted with a severe case of “infectious hepatitis,” already in and out of consciousness with severe pain in liver region. In isolation, I receive intense intravenous therapy, with orders on bed-rest for a few weeks.

After three months, I am recuperating out of isolation, slowly recovering – still very dizzy, no appetite, and general weakness – I’m given my new assignment! Mother Mistress, who is also Mother Provincial, comes to me with an overwhelming message, “Sister Martha, you were booked to start working at the protestant hospital in Vermilion, at the beginning of January. However, they will still hire you at the beginning of April. As you will need to travel, you require your driver’s license.” “Yes Mother...I’ll do my best,” expresses my willingness, though it seems impossible considering this lingering dizziness and physical weakness. However, in blind obedience – for the love of Jesus, I venture.

After two attempts, I manage to obtain my driver’s license. A new little Chevy II is at my service to work at the Vermilion protestant hospital. Unknown to me, that Archbishop had requested that our Congregation, “The Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame,” would supply a nursing nun to join the Vermilion Hospital staff beginning January 1967. This in view of easing the long-standing unfriendly atmosphere between Protestants and Catholics, in a widespread vicinity.

Amazingly, the Administrator with the Medical and Nursing Staff, congenially ignore the “set back” of three months and receive me with kindness.

Scene 9 - Assignment Protestant Hospital Work

To avoid the excessive strain that nursing often causes, I am assigned to assisting the Lab technician with menial tasks. Three months later, I'm back in active care of my "dear" patients.

Promptly acquainted with my fellow nurses, we love Mrs. Goodwin, the Senior Nurse, who is very considerate. Forty-hour weeks with sufficient staff to allow reasonable nursing service, is so very different. Over and above, officials ask me to design and paint a motif for the Institution and a mural (*history of Vermilion*) to be ready for unveiling at the opening of their new hospital. There they present to me a whole new set of paints, brushes, canvass and a fine easel, with great applause from an impressive gathering.

Shortly before my next unsuspected transfer, the Air-Cadet leader comes to me with a request. This concerns teaching and answering his eight (*14-16 year-old*) boys' questions. It would be for the next six weeks, every Thursday evening. In the town hall, I would meet them to instruct them on whatever subject I choose, and possibly help them find their own answers. Though rather surprised, yet not threatened, as I have been secretly desiring to work with young people; however, I reason within myself, I really don't have much to give, but I could tackle general ethics and the seriousness of their life.

The six weeks are over. This youth gathering has been most delightful for me, as well as an eye-opener. Knowing right well I hadn't much to give, I could at least be their friend and hear them out, privately, if requested. This was not needed at all, being there were such an ease of relationship and unity of purpose among them. Questions and comments came from all sides.

To my surprise, the Sunday morning after the six weeks, here are the eight Air Cadets in uniform lined up in the first bench at the Catholic Church, their leader with them. Father Braun calls

me forth to be with them, to then proceed with an outstanding commendation for my accomplishment among these little men. Rather stunned, what had I really done? I personally had gained quite an important reality, hitherto unknown, that is, the genuine tenderness and willingness often deeply hidden in the young hearts! Thereafter, I often pondered how the youth (*as well as adults*) can harbor simultaneously, goodness and bouts of wickedness? I really wondered....

Back to our small bungalow home, where I live with five nuns. As I came in, this is the scenario: the youngest nun, a teacher, curled up on the couch, is glued to the television, another is reading the Journal, the others must be in their room, (*the TV fan will soon request her release to marry a young suitor*). Not only do I sense a void and weariness around me, but right within me....

Sauntering down to my room, unnoticed, I land into the extra comfortable arm chair. Arms hanging over its heavily stuffed arm-rests, my head leaning back with eyes aimlessly gazing in space. Sinking in the “slough of despond,” as my life looms before me as a total failure, I venture to speak to “Him” once more – “Jesus, tell me, what is life all about? I feel so dead, I know nothing except to live on for the love of you, Jesus, who died for me – but, I don’t even know what you mean. Jesus, I want to know you!”

A knock at the door suddenly breaks this loathsome vagrancy. A nun delivers a message from Mother Provincial. Unsealing the letter with trembling fingers – due to ongoing condemnation and fear of bad news – I read: “Sister Martha, this being your twenty-ninth year of nunhood, it is your turn for a trip to France, to spend time at the Mother House and some touring. Obtain a two and a half months of leave from your work. All will be arranged for your departure at the end of June....”

Stuffing the letter in my pocket, I stroll upstairs...I want the break, yet a different destination – “Jesus help me, I don’t want to go to France....”

Scene 10 – Rescue Nurse in Peru

The headlines on the Journal state, “Rescue Nurses Needed in Disaster of Peru.” A joy rises in my heart – there I must go! perhaps help someone in their great distress – but how will this be accepted from my Superiors? Within moments, I venture my request. Somewhat dumbfounded and speechless, Sister Superior expresses her concern, “Sister Martha, you are unpredictable! You never seem to settle down and do like everyone else – go see Father Braun – and what he decides shall be done.”

O Patient Wayfarer, even though you might be almost worn-out, be sure you are most precious to me, as we travel together, this rather wearisome, “Memoir Lane.” Here is a rustic, yet peaceful oasis where we can rest a while.

As we partake of some refreshment, let's take a quick view into the next 10 years.

- Rescue Nurse in the Andean area of Peru – for two months.
- Mightily rescued from utter despair – ***New birth! New Creation.***
- “The Nurse” in Government Jail for Juvenile Delinquents.
- In Israel – water baptized in the Jordan River.
- Officially released from nunhood, admittedly, onto ***a “higher calling.”***
- Severing from all religious organizations, and wage-earning labor.
- Five years scanning Christianity, thus viewing a cross-section of contemporary Christianity, including mass evangelism.
- ***“Come away, my love”*** a definite clear calling to another phase.

Let us arise and pursue precious “Memoirs,” leading into mysterious vales....Fellow Sojourners,

Jesus has heard my heart’s desire....A great learning into a walk of faith.

Within moments, I am at the rectory. This Archbishop’s right-hand man, patiently listens to my request, “Father Braun, I am chosen to go to France, but I believe I am to go to Peru as a Rescue Nurse. Sister Superior sent me for your final say.” Then came my answer with great placidity, “Well, Sister Martha, for what I know of your life, I say – Go to Peru, as I do not want to grieve the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the diocese will assist you in this mission in South America.” And it was so!

Let’s move on with courage!

On June 27, 1970, I am on my first air travel and it is via the Andes, as a “Rescue Nurse” to the “disastered” of the Earthquake –Avalanche in Peru. “Jesus, I’m afraid to die, but even if I should lose my life, surely I would have helped someone. I hope to please you – yes – for the love of you Jesus...”

After a fourteen hour flight, the landing is in Lima. There, a priest escorts me to the “barriadas” (*slums*) of Lima. There, I resided for a few days with four nuns in a comfortable house. They graciously arrange for me to reach my destination of endeavor. This meant a voyage of about two hundred miles on one narrow road upward, around rugged mountains. Beside this rocky road, to the right is the treacherous precipice of two thousand feet down to the great Rio River – no guard rails.

Awaiting this departure, I benefit greatly from the kindness of these “Canadian Missionaries,” nuns and priests. Yet my dilemma increases. They all seem to be of a wearisome spirit, but content with their life-style, while I am not with my religious existence, but “stifled....” “Surely, dear Jesus, you will show me

someday....” However, I’m quite overwhelmed with my “great project” at hand.

The fifth of July, I join a group of volunteers leaving to help the disastered mountaineers. The Peruvians, noted for “slow motion,” the departure is at about 5 pm for a twelve-hour trip. This is the scenario: a male driver, with eight women in a dilapidated van – bald tires – wired up windows. No moonlight makes it more treacherous...especially with only faint headlights. The driver announces, “We have now come to an extremely high altitude – is everyone alright?” Along with a few weak, “yes,” there’s a commotion at the back. One lady, a Peruvian nun has fainted and unable to swallow my “Reviver Pill.” This launches my “great feat” as a “Rescue Nurse...” Fortunately, we will soon descend toward the plateau between mountain ranges.

As our co-wayfarer begins to regain consciousness, vomiting (*quite inevitable for her*) becomes near unbearable to us. However, dawn is appearing as we approach destination. It is indeed a relief to be out of the vehicle onto, supposedly safer ground. This two short months of experience in the midst of the aftermath in the region of the earthquake-avalanche has made a sobering impact in my destiny. No doubt, a volume of numerous events, certainly would be of interest, as all follows the trend of the voyage...including the incident of a special meal prepared for us by the Army men – boiled snake and half-roasted lamb, which they seemed to thoroughly enjoy!

Toward the end of my alleged “rescue mission,” one afternoon, finding a quiet place, I sat, pondering deeply, eyes closed. Stirred by someone who sat beside me on this large fallen tree, we readily engaged in communication. The middle-age man introduces himself, Father General of the Dominican Order, here as a Volunteer to help the people. “Sister, surely you are here for the same purpose, right,” he inquires eagerly. “Indeed I am,” is my spontaneous response. “Tell me, what are we doing here? As for me, I’m really searching! There just has to be more to this life,

than being ‘religious’...,” he declares with purpose. “Father, this is so very pertinent to my own query concerning this matter...” my prompt affirmation is accompanied with meaningful eye contact.

Both endowed with a great desire to give ourselves to a valuable cause, and weary of our celibacy, we soon realize that we are no candidate to solve our present mutual dilemma. He wisely arises saying, decisively, “I believe, I must go.” I answered, “Right!”

Time to return home, and the only possible way to come down from the mountains is by that rugged narrow one way available. However, this trip will be in a jeep with two army men – no choice! The next day, by God’s mercy, we came down in half the time we went up. Travelling so rapidly from such high altitude unto sea-level in Lima, somehow causes me severe lung congestion. The men bring me to a Doctor, there is just time to receive an injection and immediately board the plane for Canada. After a rather miserable flight, I arrive as scheduled. The nuns are there to “rescue” me from my “rescue mission...”

Scene 11 – “The Nurse” – Government Juvenile Jail

Within a short time, various circumstances culminate to my employment as “the Nurse” in a Government jail for juvenile delinquents of Alberta. My first day at work, an Official escorts me to the medical area, and explains the essence of my function for the present time. “These two nurses are not to continue with us. They connive together against us – “bucking” adamantly what we purpose to do for these young people in trouble. It certainly will not be pleasant for you, yet we cannot dismiss them according to a policy – but somehow we believe your presence will bring forth their departure peacefully. We can no longer bear this detrimental attitude. Sister Martha, let us know how we can help you.” This certainly is a challenge beyond my expectation.

Finally, we arrive to the area – I’m introduced as their supervisor and “helper,” and he leaves....back to his administration office at

the other end of the building. I'll meet him again four years later, reluctantly accepting my resignation. Entering into this endeavor, again in "blind" obedience, I surely have to talk to Jesus about this one. Totally confident that in His true love, he would help me in every situation not to fear.

Left with two women appearing rather shocked, I being well prepared simply begin casual conversation. Ignoring their "icy" attitude, I give them all consideration possible – I sit beside the "knitter," showing interest in her work, and there attempt communication with the other. Such an uneasy relationship causes me to saunter around learning all I could by much observation. Amazingly, within a few weeks, both nurses are gone. The "knitter," well sixty-five requests her leave which is readily accepted. The other nurse decides she wants a two month holiday – which is promptly granted. Shortly after her departure, she sends a message that she is sick and will not return. As an Officer relays this to me, he also offers to hire another nurse immediately. As I become well aware of my duties, another nurse is needless. Unexpectedly my wages are doubled.

These young offenders are kept behind locked doors in the care of Social Workers. The Nurse with a weekly Doctor are responsible for the health care of inmates, and the inspection of the units, to assure required sanitation.

Averaging sixty boys and twenty girls, they are an extremely sad and miserable section of humanity. Due to damaging drugs and perversion, boys tend to mock and laugh "it off," while girls generally manifest deep hurt and anger. Often they have neurological symptoms and in need of a Neurologist. One example is Jean, affected by severe headache, is referred by our Doctor to Doctor Paul.

Here I am, observing the meticulous examination of the Neurologist, when Paul calls me. "Sister Martha, this girl is so tense needing daily massage for at least ten days. Come, I will show you how to do it." I have no choice...His hand over my hand

guides me into a deep massage therapy which indeed removed the kinks in neck and spine muscles. However, our close body contact involved in the procedure stirs within my feeble frame, agonizing moments. While Jean gets dressed in the next room, this man of few words adds, “She will do well along with your loving touch and attention.” All is over and we leave promptly.

The message of love, stirs within me an unbearable heartache – even worse than all the frequent assaults of torment for twenty-five years (23-47). Deep within is a desperate, “Jesus! Jesus! in your great love, please deliver me from what I believe to be an unfulfilled love for Paul.” Answered prayer comes with a near-fatal crisis....

ACT FIVE.

Dreg of Despair – Springboard to Hope of Glory

Scene 1 – Life Threatened – Rescue by The Angel of His Presence

That same day, has arrived from the Pope, an answer to my letter calling for spiritual help three months ago. The “nebulous” few words, “...just keep on trying harder...” sends me in total despair – “no hope, no use of living.”

Withdrawing secretly at the back of the convent, after refusing a group of nuns begging me to be their partner in the card game, I am on the verge of self-destruction. Just then, I drop the two scalpels (*Operating Room knives*) and falling to my knees, arms stretched out toward heaven, I cry out my despair, “If there is a living God in heaven, have mercy on me, a sinner....” Weak and languid, tears flooding my face, I am on the floor unable to move.... Having no recollection of what followed, somehow, I am at work at the jail the next morning....

Within a few days, I meet a God-sent woman, “Sister Martha, you appear sad and tired,” is her concerned greeting. “Kay, I am so distressed and discouraged, is there no more hope for me?” blurting out my desolation. Vibrant, she explains the answer. “Oh! my dear, ***you need Jesus....***” Vehemently interjecting, “Where is He?” is my ardent quest. “Come with me tonight, there, a man of God speaks about our ***Saviour,***” she assures me, adding, “I’ll pick you up at about 7 pm.” “Fine,” is my whole-hearted response.... Joy and hope arises as I think, “what if this man knows Jesus?” and besides, I have nothing to lose.

Scene 2 – My Soul Has Escaped as a Bird

I’m there, but, I sit by the door, so I can run out quickly from this

protestant hall, if there should be demons there. The time is come for me to hear the **Word of “Life.”** Appears, an “ordinary” man dressed in “ordinary” clothes, with an “ordinary” book in his hand, and setting it on an “ordinary” stand, this man begins to sing, “What a friend we have in Jesus, all our griefs and sins to bear....” With a joyous countenance, he begins to expound on the **Living Christ – the Way, the Truth and the Life – His mighty Redemption and the forgiveness of sin**, for everyone who believes and receives – Jesus, in love for everyone died and rose again paying the price! Thus, lost sinners become His purchased possession!

Overwhelmed by an assurance that Jesus loved me and through **His blood** “I am forgiven,” even I am a brand **“new creature!”** The fear of damnation is gone – a joy unspeakable floods my whole being.

Scene 3 - Darkness to Light - Death to Life

Oblivious of the setting, having been delivered from the power of darkness and translated – as I believed and received – into **Light, Life and Love** – knowing and believing the truth, I am FREE! Tears of joy, hands stretched toward heaven, from deep within comes a loud cry, **“Jesus! Jesus!”** The man of God ventures to explain my exuberance, “She’s got it! she’s got it!” Confidently, I respond to his genuine call, “Come forth, our sister, and all who believe and receive, I will pray upon you an **empowering of the Holy Spirit**, to walk on diligently in this, new **“Life in Christ Jesus....”**

Fellow Sojourner, let's pause, rest and be restored in this peaceful oasis, and span a forty-year bridge of “time and space” to ponder briefly on this present age. The cataclysmic events on our planet lead to the fulfillment of Christ Jesus and all he accomplished in His incarnate life, His death on the cross, and His resurrection.

There is a secret place of true safety for everyone in whom the **“Light, the Life, and the Love of God”** is powerfully radiant –that is deep in the hearts of many believers. They are overcomers, often despised, even suffer violent hatred

from masses of ungodly people. Yet, just as their soon coming "King of kings and Lord of lords," they endure their cross, despise the shame, for the joy and glory that is to be revealed.

Blessed are ye that live in the Light, having a song in your heart, "Though the darkness deepens, Lord in thee I abide!"

Lets' be on our way!

Scene 4 - Alive but Unwise

It is not a dream – it is real! Now, I know Jesus, my Saviour – He took my heavy burden of sin away, and I don't have to go to hell anymore....! I am so glad, so very glad! Surely, Sister Superior will be so thankful to hear such "good news," and it is for everyone who believes and receives! Graciously, this stately woman rather suspiciously listens, but suddenly interjects, "Sister Martha, didn't you know this before? – do try to be very quiet until I can bring you to a Psychiatrist for help." Spontaneously, I plead, "No! no! please Sister do not involve a Psychiatrist – he's a mind-man and my case is a **heart-to-heart relationship with the man Christ Jesus,**" frantically, wanting to explain what is a reality to me!

During the following weeks, I endeavor to be very quiet, faring on the "**bread of life**" received that special night. Occasionally, a few nuns secretly venture to hear more, tapping my "baby artesian well." In "blind" obedience, I soon quench my great desire to share, but also to avoid landing under psychiatric care.

In a private interview, "Sister Martha, I ask you to find a Catholic widow in the city, who would supply you with a rented lodging. This, because what you now believe is very disturbing to us. Oh! come back for the monthly meeting, bring in your wages as usual, but please do not spread your "new" doctrine."

Within two days, my trusting prayer to Jesus is answered. I walk into a poor widow's shabby home. Willingly, she responds

to my request, leads me down to her bare, unfinished basement. A couple brings me the essential furnishings to survive, along with a small allowance from the nuns, I live on.... My work at the jail is becoming more enjoyable. Now, as invited I attend Catholic Charismatic meetings weekly.

Fellow Wayfarer, as we pause in this delightful oasis that is evermore filled with the peace of God, and assurance forever, let's ponder....

Some forty years ago, similarly to Lazarus, Jesus called me out of a stinking grave of sin and death. I came out having "passed from death unto life everlasting!" So very glad, but, without knowledge of how many layers of grave clothes I needed to be loosed from. As a spiritual infant, I am ignorant of my need.

Fellow believers, kindly, gradually unshackle me of the most "salient" offenders – such as a "bitter critical" spirit and "haughtiness of youth." As for the deeply embedded destructive heresies inherited from ancestors, hypocritical religiosity, and vain conversation received by tradition – all this and much more would require prolonged divine intervention. Being a neophyte, I am totally unaware of the oncoming intensity.

Let's return to our journey.

At the convent, Mother Blain, thirty-six-year old Superior General has arrived from France for her "canonical" visit to the community. Alerted concerning Sister Martha – being a troublemaker – Mother requests that someone assists her in coming to my dwelling place. At the bottom of the narrow, somewhat dilapidated stairs, I greet joyfully this "Mother," whom I cherish.

After a little refreshment, Mother proceeds with the purpose intended. Turning to me, she graciously voices her desire to hear my story. "Mother! Jesus loves me so much, He died on the cross

for me, for my sins, and I'm forgiven! Mother! I'm **forgiven directly from God**, and the truth makes me free. I'm a "**new creature**," I have **everlasting life**! And I want all the nuns to believe and receive...." With an impressive serenity, this tearful bright-eyed woman, her hand on my hands speaks, "My dear Sister Martha, I see! I see! We will leave now, but I will see you at the convent before my departure...."

Back to my interaction with the Charismatics.

Scene 5 - In Need of More Freedom - Jerusalem

I am invited for a "group tour" to Israel. Across the city with my little car, off I go to Mother Blain with my request. As she is already reaching for her cheque-book, she casually answers my petition, "I truly do not understand why you want to go to the "old Jerusalem," as now you will see the "New Jerusalem," but here is \$10,000 trusting this will suffice for this journey." Very thankful for her generosity, I hand her my study of the Pope's new document on religious life.

Again, in "blind" obedience I have, for the last year, struggled with the complexity of the Pope's documents, but to dear Mother, I can explain my confusion concerning the goal of religious life. "Mother, since I **know Jesus who died and rose again**, He lives and we have a **heart-to-heart relationship**. Really, I can't fit in nunhood anymore. I do not know how to proceed to be free. Absolutely unperturbed, with reassuring serenity, she advises, "Go in peace to Jerusalem, my dear, I'll see you when you return." Back to my humble "oasis," I muse, "Jesus, who is this woman? She seems to be so interested in you, my Saviour!"

Where do we go from here, Lord? Now I'm on a fourteen-hour flight to Jerusalem, with a group of Charismatics. After a ten-day tour in Israel, and attending Katherine Kuhlman's meeting, we are on our way back. Cuddling my tight corner near a window, I gaze at a breath-taking panorama of vastness, grandeur and beauty of the azure firmament ever embracing our little planet!

Far deeper yet is within me, a sweet meditation. In an overflowing joyful, peace, I muse, “Jesus, I know you now, you really know how to love – I’m forgiven!!! Now, I’m truly sure, all I need is you, I want to become just like you – to love as much as you love – please help me to get out of nunhood, without running away.... I must leave religion. I’m trusting you, Lord Jesus to ordain it your way!”

Scene 6 – Miraculous Release from Nunhood

Down again on Canadian soil, there is within me a bursting anticipation, to taste anew the peaceful, understanding ambiance that pervades in the presence of Mother Blain. I really love all these people I’m leaving, but I must go.

Seated beside my admired “Messenger,” I listen attentively. Undaunted Mother, with a gracious authenticity assures me that God has favored me with a “higher calling” than that of nunhood. Consequently, all previous “religious obligations, including the three vows, are obliterated and on to a new life. “You are no longer ‘a nun,’ but a **child of God!** Now, my dear Lucille, you are totally free to serve the Lord according to your ‘**high calling**’ – Do pray for us...”

I am overwhelmed by God’s answer to my prayer through a fearless and true vessel. As I express my heartfelt gratitude, comes her petition as well as an awesome offer. “Shortly, I will address the community with a brief exhortation on prayer. As I conclude, may I call you to come and stand by me, and address the group concerning your ordained, peaceful departure. It is favorable for everyone to realize that your stand is an answer to God’s calling elsewhere. Lucille, fear not – you are free.” Shaken by Mother’s genuine and humble manner of dealing with me, I consider it a privilege to have such an opportunity to speak a “departure” word to these precious women, with love and peace.

“Dear Sisters, I am leaving shortly, released from nunhood. Having heard and believed the **truth of redemption**, my sins are forgiven! I shall not come into condemnation, I have passed **from death to life**, setting me free to **follow Jesus, my Shepherd**, wheresoever He leads. Not that I understand with my mind, but I believe and I trust Him in a **heart-to-heart love relationship** to sustain me all throughout the ‘narrow way’. I am so very grateful for your patient endurance of me, during my long search.... Surely, God has a purpose for each one.”

Nodding to Mother, I take a chair nearby. With a few words, she dismisses the group, who quietly moves directly to the Banquet table – a sumptuous one indeed, I know Sister Florence’s culinary art! – the “red wine” never forgotten. Mother cordially invites me to her special “fare-well” meal, which I can only respectfully decline. By far, is it the priority of the hour. With an unspoken, vivid and momentous “adieu” – we part....

Just as I attempt to slip away unnoticed, seventy-two-year old Sister Angelina is beside me, she holds my arm. I halt to hear her heart’s cry, “Sister Martha, Sister Martha, why can I not have your faith? How I wish that I could leave with you.” Throwing my arms around her, we weep in soulful frailty. “Sister Angelina, you are especially dear to me, and I would be delighted to have you with me. However, before God, wherever we are, we will trust Him to comfort your heart. Jesus has a purpose, unique for you – He hears your heart’s cry. Dear one, trust Him to bring you to your expected end.”

With an “Au Revoir” I’m on my way across the city, in my little green “Duster.” Back into that rented humble abode, I wonder, I ponder, I muse, “Am I dreaming?” “Oh! no, “to Catholics a renegade, **in Christ a New Creation.**”

My Fellow Sojourner, let's take a break right where we are.... A little sustenance is timely. Is it not absolutely amazing to have witnessed how, Our Father who is in heaven, answers prayer, exceeding abundantly above what we can ask or think. He even responds to a simple trusting Him and "resting in His Love." What peace, joy and tranquility I so often missed because I did not know the Living God – His Love and His Sovereignty. O, the wonders of Redemption!

My Reader, we are about to venture into the long narrow pathway of my past forty years. I would shiver and quake at my stumbling, fumbling, grumbling throughout my tumbling from phase to phase. Little did I know then that being elected by Almighty God to His high calling requires a time in the great-waste, howling wilderness. I had to be "humbled, and proven" to know what was in my heart, would I obey His new commandment of love?

My Faithful Reader, as we began our journey in "good cheer," shall we pursue on "Memoir Lane" – rejoicing evermore as the "Day Star" is arising in our hearts!

Scene 7 – In Vehement Pursuit- More of Him

In recent years, I have suppressed recurrent doubts concerning the Catholic organization. Since I became a "**new creature**," I am washed, **sanctified and justified**, and now **under the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus**, making me free from the deadly ancestral slavery of the law of sin and death....

The doubts of yester-years are changed into a stark reality...I must depart from the Roman Catholic camp that could not lead me to the **Jesus who is the bread come down from heaven**, able to **impart Life** everlasting. However, I cringe in my natural being at the consequences entailed by such a stand. Moreover, multitudes of loved-ones would fade away, as well as the last feeble props providing some security....

Scene 8 - His Body - His Blood - In Remembrance

Off, I am to the Spokane Immaculate Heart Retreat Centre – a place of “nowhere” for me.” There, for one month of silence with my Bible, I spend many hours in the Chapel, sitting in the first bench, eyes closed, my mind travelling a thousand directions in seconds. Nevertheless, I’m often greatly stirred by an ongoing tugging at the deepest fiber of my heart, as my eyes land on the “tabernacle” – the “Eucharist.” I have a **heart-to-heart “communion” with “the Way, the Truth and the Life” within** me, concerning “this host” that has puzzled me since the age of seven – the time of my “first communion.”

From my Bible that’s on my lap, a few words of Psalm 120, settles the matter forever. “Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue.” I arise, free as a bird, the tugging snare is broken by the **“Lion of the Tribe of Judah! Jesus Christ my Lord.”**

Scene 9 - Touring Roman Catholic Clergy before Leaving

Back in Edmonton, here I am, a neophyte, unwise yet venturesome and with a burning in my bones to announce the “Good News.” Beginning with the Archbishop, whom I greatly respect - glancing at his watch, “I have a few minutes,” he informs me.... “Oh! your grace, Jesus is alive, He has my heart and I must leave the Catholic church – am I missing something?” – I truly plead. Checking his wrist-watch again, he placidly reassures me “Sister, you are doing a good work – just continue as you are doing....” Arising, he walks toward the door, I promptly disappear, releasing him to a more important business.

There are two more priests of renown that I must reach – in my zeal without knowledge – “Father Braun, it’s true! Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and we are “forgiven” if we only believe and receive Him, - I know – I’m free and I am leaving the Roman Catholic religion, **to belong only to Jesus.**” Overwhelmed, he

bursts out his long standing burden, “Sister Martha, how can you be so free? – what a privilege! The vow of celibacy has been so very difficult for me, however, I must continue to be faithful....” As his expression is becoming “brazen” I slip away saying, “Father, I just wanted to share...” and I’m off to another parish.

“Father Ray, I have a very serious question concerning the “Eucharist” – do you truly and fully believe in the “transubstantiation,” – that is when the priest prays over the host and the wine, those become the physical body and blood of Jesus?” is my question. To me, his answer, tinted with ridicule substantiates my “escape out of the snare” – “That’s what we tell the parishioners, but I have never believed it, nor ever will.” Indignant, thinking how much more deception must there be in that “religious organization,” I question, “Father, why do you lie to people?” – with nonchalance, he reasons, “Oh well, I have to hold my job....”

Scene 10 – Release from Ancestral Religious Bondage

The vacant look and the nebulous responses of those precious slaves of religiosity sever the last vestige of Roman Catholicism within me, while I experience simultaneously a phenomenal surge of love for the multitude left behind. As well, I have clearer understanding of the reality of my ***deliverance from the power of darkness***, and my ***translation into the Kingdom of the King of kings***.

*Lucille Poulin
at 50*



ACT SIX.

Alone as a Sparrow...Upon the Housetop

Scene 1 - Exploring Christendom - Far and Wide

....alone as a sparrow upon the housetop – another layer of “grave clothes” has been stripped off – an unusual bareness is happening, yet my soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour! This seceding being effective also creates crucial consequences that are already looming up on the horizon.

I have moved from the weary catholic widow’s basement to an apartment. Working only part-time in nursing favors my expeditions to find others as myself – a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people – yes indeed! ...just who I want to be with, a people who also has received a “high calling” – who live to show forth the praises of Him, who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light!

Standing on the threshold of Christendom, barely a “spiritual toddler” – a lamb still on milk, yet completely enthralled with her Shepherd! With absolute trust in his leading, I venture on, favored greatly by the company of a few brethren of various groups, who urge me to come with them. With ease, I benefit from multiple air-borne travels throughout Canada and United States, to Florida – great outdoor rally for youth – a few thousands taught by Derek Prince and David Wilkerson.

Fellow brethren insist on my meeting Derek – now a widower – “perhaps I should be his wife...” they say. In line to greet him, I just know, fine man of God, but definitely not for our union in marriage. Startled but unstirred, all is soon in oblivion and I muse,

“Father God, what will you show me next?” Now in California, six months in school of ministry, there I experience great weariness, even though multiple teachers try their best.

Within a few years, I become intensely involved in mass evangelism with three different evangelists leading some 40,000 to 65,000 people. Confident that surely this would be an excellent way to spread the “Good News,” revealing the wondrous salvation of Jesus to so many hungry souls.... Unable to explain the matter, but time after time, I return home disillusioned.... Now, I’m invited to live with various Christian families, which I gladly accept. After a few months, I transfer to another as understood.

Within two years I am privileged to be in close contact with Baptists, Catholic Charismatics, Mennonites, Pentecostals, Greek Orthodox, and an Ukranian widow, a recent neophyte. All these families consider themselves Christians, and I am no “connoisseur in the matter.” One is super condescending, others are more than willing to counsel me, while each family is struggling in some degree with their marital situation and child-raising. Through it all I perceive in these precious couples a yearning for God.

Still working part-time in nursing, I leave the sphere of technical progress of the nursing field. As I withdraw to serve the elderly and assist the dying, I realize that this endeavor has its “hidden treasures.” Indeed, this chosen type of caring, did prove to be an important facet of my entire nursing days. Having come to a halt, I am mightily enthralled that ***the glory of a mystery among the Gentiles is Christ in me, the hope of glory.*** All I want, as I minister physical care to Seniors and dying ones, is to be as an Angel of God, with rays of hope and consolation. Another precious endeavor is among the weary and mourning families – sorrows upon sorrows!

Scene 2 - Disillusioned

As I pursue, sometimes late in the night, often looms before me the panorama of the recent scanning of a cross-section of

“Christiandom.” As a whole, I perceive it as a “hodge-podge” of denominations and religious groups, each claiming to be the right one. For me, probing Christiandom is over. I must arise out of spiritual infancy, and cease searching for perfect brethren who could be my models for me to learn to be like Jesus. The man ***Christ Jesus, my mediator revealed to me His Father***, and now I often cry, “Abba, Father.”

Scene 3 - No Props - I Must Go It Alone

This night, my heart’s cry is, “Father, what now? I am more than ever, as a sparrow alone on a housetop. In my quest to be like your dear Son, Jesus, no one seems to understand me. Even the finest Christians I meet are afraid of me.” “Lucille, you must settle down – have you lost your mind? You’re just like a butterfly going from flower to flower – you are too concerned about God. You need a covering from a Pastor and a church group...settle down!”

My precious co-Sojourner, let’s have a respite and span over these many years of intense discoveries – real “eye opener.”

Now, born from above – a brand new creation – I know I am washed sanctified and justified as though I had never sinned. However, though I wonderfully escape the grave- many grave clothes are still stifling me – I have so much to learn. Very soon I will know that it is Jesus who said, “Follow me.” Setting my vision on my crucified Beloved, I begin to understand that as I would be crucified with Him, I had to go it alone – no props.... Now that I had entered the “narrow way” that leads to a glorious resurrection, the cross before the crown of Life!

We’ve seen momentous events, but these last thirty years of “Memoir Lane” will be indeed great and notable ones....

Let’s be on our way with our divine Escort!

Scene 4 - Great Debt Owed to High Pressure Moments

Bewildered, I think that Christians were against me, which I cannot understand. However, I eventually realized that they had a sacred calling to help me learn total dependence upon God and hear His voice. As I receive my Father's special training, I owe them a great debt.

The time has come to settle all interactions in the city and go to my aged mother. With meager belongings in the back of my car, I am on my way to Bonnyville, a far off Northern town. Free as a bird, I sing unto my Beloved, trusting Him fully for arrangements at my destination. Those four hours seem short, and with my joyful ninety-three-year-old mother, I enjoy a meal at her comfortable Senior Home.

Toward evening, I slip away to Baba Welychka across the street. This delightful seventy-five-year-old widow alone in her bungalow residence is very lonely. Having gladly received me, in full assurance she exclaims, "Sister Lucille, I just know that you are to make your home with me, and that for a long time. Bring in your suitcases – here is your room..." We embrace heartily – I am so thankful. "Baba, this is an awesome answer for both of us – a direct response from our Heavenly Father," acknowledging her gracious welcome. With a very dear neighbor, Beatrice, together we enjoy many delightful fellowships, as Jesus is the center of our conversations. We are growing in the Lord as "three peas in a pod."

I take employment in the fifteen-bed Protestant hospital. The administrator is a vibrant Baptist. Enjoying nursing, she is often in our midst helping with patient care. While we are working together, she asks me, "Can you tell me about the Holy Spirit?" "Rhea as a child of God, the Holy Spirit is like an umbilical cord via our Heavenly Father. Our dear Father wants us to be Spirit-filled to overflowing..." as I speak, she interjects, "Lucille, I really want that." Turning to her, with a hand on her shoulder, words of "Life" flow – "Receive ye the Holy Ghost!" and she breaks forth

in other tongues – beaming she is full of a new joy! Finishing our work in the delivery room, we each return to our own work.

My time away from the hospital duty is shared with Baba and Maman at the Senior Home close by. Among some fifty elderly, there is a Mrs. Brenna who seems to have adopted a special place at the entrance. Invariably, she harasses me when I come to see my Mother. Her little daggers are, “Here you are again – can’t you stay home – nobody likes you around here – leave your poor Mother alone....” All I know to do is to ignore her, and move on to a beneficial time with a godly woman in her little sanctuary.

As I depart the unhappy woman is still there, grumbling and expressing an unfulfilled desire, “Nobody ever wants to bring me to my daughter who lives in the country...” It really isn’t what I want to do, but within my being there is clear knowing, “Do good to those who hate you.” I venture gently, “Mrs. Brenna, my car is at the door, do you want a drive to your daughter?” Looking sideways, she accepts hesitantly, “I guess so, since there is no one else,” and we’re on our way.... Through her usual surliness she turns toward me and comments, “I heard that God takes care of you more than any husband could; no wonder you can be happy since you have no troubles...” With a nod of approval and a smile, I drive into their farm yard to meet a fine daughter, who receives her graciously and thanks me.

One evening, Baba shares a long standing sorrow. As we’re reading about the deep work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a child of God, she bursts out in tears, and tells it the best she can in English as she is Russian. “Sister Lucille, not very long ago a group of wonderful people came from North Battleford to our church to tell us about the Saviour Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. “Sister,” and very sorrowfully, she continues, “it was so wonderful – we were so glad, so glad – but something happened, it was so sad...” Continuing, but unable to explain, she relates that her church all cut off from that group to stay very close to Jesus, but afraid of the Holy Spirit.

Scene 5 - New Direction - Glimpse of Latter Rain

I being unaware, at the time, of the Latter Rain Movement I encouraged her and heard her out. I attended the Ukranian Pentecostal church with her upon her request. There also I experienced kind, willing brethren, but squelched, afflicted and paralyzed with fear. Recently some forty years later, I am a witness that Beatrice emerged from this stifled group and is growing mightily in ***Light-Life and Love in the power of the Holy Spirit***. She is one who really loves her Saviour, and trusts in our Heavenly Father's care!

A definite mandate from our Father is to cease "wage earning" and undertake full care of my ninety-five-year-old Mother. After our short fellowship that evening, I explain the new plan for us. Together, Maman we would completely trust in our Heavenly Father's guidance and care.... "Abba, Father, surely this from you – merci! merci!" She responds with joy, adding immediately, "Anytime you are ready, my dear Lucille, let's go!" We both walk to the Matron's Office, to share our plan. A bit surprised, she highly approves our endeavor, and addresses my Mother, "Rose Alba, we'll surely miss you here, but here is next best to a "Mother and daughter" good relationship!"

When Rhea, the Administrator at the hospital hears of my venturing, she willingly releases me to my new duty. Now Baba is absolutely unable to quite agree. However, tearfully she releases me in love for Jesus. As we embrace with a somewhat stressful "adieu," I can only thank her for such wonderful hospitality.

These next few years filled with momentous events, namely visits from the Pastor from the English Pentecostal Church, who insists that I should be in his assembly. Declining his persuasion, I move on. I attend various small gatherings where people are hungry for God. It's another valuable phase in my pursuit to become just like my Beloved Jesus! One special truth rejoices me greatly – lessening all my great fears, ***"Christ in me the hope of glory!"***

No more desperate cries, “Jesus! Jesus! where are you...?” The wonder is, I am now a **“new creation” born from above** – no longer a sinner, but filled with the life of God. It is simply a new way of living, that is, a new life divine – **The mystery of Redemption!**

My Fellow Sojourner, just before we embark on our last thirty year panoramic voyage, let's take a short halt.

I want to answer your pertinent question. “Lucille, as you talk about this “new life,” are you saying you had a clear sailing ever after?” A brief of my personal experience within time and space of 1980-2004 will begin to answer you.

Scene 6 - Care and Fellowship - Ninety-Five-Year-old Treasure

It is indeed an impressive autumn day! Golden leaves are scurrying on each side of Highway 28. Two carefree joyful travelers are moving on toward their next dwelling. For me, it is simply breathtaking – the serene reality of the hour. Beside me is my elderly Mother, who is exceptionally alert and in true love with our Heavenly Father since her **“New Life in Christ Jesus,”** four years ago. This treasured person now entrusted me, certainly will be a milestone in my journey toward perfect union with God.

Amazingly, we are welcomed and even given first choice of suites – by a Catholic Matron – in a new Catholic Senior Home. Moreover, though I’m only fifty-six, I’m heartily invited to abide with my Mother – how wonderful!

Three peaceful years have elapsed, fervently drinking at that River flowing from the Throne of God. Together, we spend hours reading the Word of God, as **the Holy Spirit strengthens us, quickening Light, Life and Love in our heart.** What a privilege to have this time together. Toward the end of the three years, my niece, Esther – a neophyte – with Daniel her husband

and five children visit us. As we become acquainted, Daniel heartily invites Mother and I to henceforth make our home with them on a busy dairy farm. After this enjoyable visit, we are left to ponder on such an overwhelming and extremely **consequential** endeavor.

Scene 7 - Together - Off to Dairy Farm - Growing Family

Trusting fully in our Father's guidance, we immediately know we are to accept joyfully. Maman, a ninety-eight-year-old courageous woman, speaks as usual, a precise answer, "My dear Lucille, let's go!"

Soon, we are quite at ease in our purposeful dwelling – Mother's easy chair is well positioned by the large window from where she keenly seems to take notice of every important event, inside and outside. With her Bible in her lap, she still finds time to read, calling me occasionally to share her joy over what Jesus said – Precious!

Though Esther and I are of opposite character – the Love of our Saviour has begun a mighty transformation in us. Until this day, we have been laboring in the Lord's vineyard together, for some thirty years.

Dairy work is extensive keeping Daniel very busy in that area, and Esther is well-occupied with their young family. Mother, needing very little of my time, I'm truly delighted to help Esther wheresoever I see the greatest need. I consider it a special privilege to be active in the midst of this interesting young family.

Esther is favored with rather easy deliveries. The five older ones were born in hospital, the sixth is born at home. Again it is definitely a venture in faith for Esther, Daniel and myself, but all is fine. The five more born before 1992 do become added blessings in our midst. The older siblings awaiting to see and care for their little brother or sister, is enjoyable to witness. However, this is also a learning and requires steps of faith. I admire the awesome sense of responsibility in the oldest daughter.

These years in a lively, yet peaceful setting with my aged Mother, busy Esther and family, are truly priceless. Together, we often read the Word of God, and rejoice greatly, gaining freedom in Christ Jesus. Somehow, Mother and I are to return to the city for one year.

Scene 8 - Phenomenal Experience - Life or Death

Mother, now in her 100th year becomes extremely ill. Medical expertise declares her a dying woman, and tells me so, the appearance being most evident. Released to me, as I request, the nurses graciously assist in transferring my unconscious dear Mother to the ambulance. Alone with her in our modest dwelling, sitting beside her, holding her hand, I wait peacefully, completely trusting God's undertaking... another opportunity to know **experientially** my Heavenly Father.

Signs of consciousness appear and within a short time she is completely revived. What a learning for both of us. Life goes on and within two months, Mother has completed her 101st year. She needs help, but is fully alert in her mind. Mightily favored with the peace of God, in our little sanctuary in mid-city, we are overwhelmed with joy and thanksgiving for so great Salvation. Ahead are fierce sea storms even a catastrophic shipwreck, also considered as waste, howling terrible wilderness.

The year is soon to end and we are looking eagerly to return to the farm. It is a fine October day and Maman has a pressing desire that we should return with our dear Esther and her family. In the vicinity, is a rather distressed family, needing a place to live. We both agree to offer this family our place as it is – rent-paid – one month. This offer is most gladly accepted and we are happily on our way back to the farm with meager personal belongings. We are received with open arms.

Maman, now quite frail is extremely tired, but so very glad to be “home” again! As for me, though I spend more time caring for Mother, I'm back to some activity of the household. Often, “non-

complaining,” Maman would whisper her prayer, “Abba Father, please take me with you – Thy will be done.” On December 25th, we are alerted, with heavenly peace, that this is the night for Maman to leave her mortal body, and be with Abba Father and our Blessed Redeemer forever.

Scene 9 – Mother’s Departure – Centenarian



Photo taken April 1986

Born April 1885

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now my eye seeth THEE.

Job 42.5

Rose Alba Poulin-Crôteau née Benoit

As I give her this divine message, breaking forth in a radiant smile, and with a serene, feeble voice she expresses her secure joy, “Wonderful, I’m going to see my Heavenly Father!” Esther, Daniel and I remain at her bedside. It is shortly after midnight – all is peaceful. We are quietly flowing with this momentous “departure.” Suddenly, opening her eyes, she looks towards us saying, “My dear children.” Then on behalf of this ‘little’ flock,

I express a release - “Abba Father, we willingly surrender our Beloved Mother unto Thee.” Just then with her last breath, flows “Abba Père.” Her chin falls down to her chest – pulse and breath is no more. This saint has left her “clay vessel” which served her over 100 years, and her long life is eternally joined to ***Eternal Life***. She is back to her Heavenly Father.

As she had requested a simple burial, just like Jesus – we reverently do so. In obedience, we refuse to mourn, but in the power of the Holy Spirit, we receive the oil of joy for mourning. With joy we increase our drawing water out of the ***wells of Salvation***. As loving young children want to know what happened to their “Mémère,” it becomes marvelous opportunities to instruct them about ***Eternal Life and Salvation***!

My fellow Sojourner, let's span time and space and pause a while in this little oasis. The scenario of these 6 years, reveals a clear sailing with a few heavy ripples.

Though Mother is gone, all seems a perfect leading that I remain part of this family. It is indeed a privilege for me to be active with these precious little ones. However, the vehement desire of my heart is to be with adults who yearn for God, at all cost. I'm definitely under divine guidance to embark into this endeavor whole heartily.

I perceive that Esther and Daniel are emerging, raising “fast-coming offspring,” while still adjusting in their marriage. Moreover, five neophytes desire to leave all, for the love of Jesus, and become permanent residents, as one family to serve God together. As for me, I had come to offer a labour of love, the best I know how among our Heavenly Father's willing people.

Let's return to an unexpected, unorganized gathering, which developed gradually – what a scenario!

Scene 10 - Our Father's Handpicked Gathering

Between 1987 and 1994, twenty-four persons are now on this

farm – three couples with their fifteen children and three single women. An eight-bay Greenhouse has been purchased. The Greenhouse and the dairy cows, fully occupy the adults and the four older children – now young adults.

Two boys ten and twelve, are most intriguing, certainly require more personal care. We try our very best to help them, but they have leagued to be scornful. We attempt to reach out for help, but we receive nebulous response. What do we do but to continue more than ever to cry to our Father in heaven, and patiently deal with these two, among the other thirteen children. Almost overnight the four older siblings become extremely discontent. Frustrated with our way of living they want to live like ordinary Christians, referring to the kinfolk in the neighborhood.

For quite some time, admittedly I had strongly stirred my willing brethren who truly desire to serve God whole heartedly. My aim being to read and obey the Word of God to the letter. However, not having as yet revelation of this truth; “for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,” it causes havoc in many ways. It is all a matter of emerging out of darkness to walk in the light, and have fellowship with one another.

Here I am in the midst of the Good Shepherd’s little flock and there is discord. Perplexed, I commune with my heavenly Father, “I know that Jesus Christ lives in me, yet I experience a total failure in my walk in the narrow way. Father, I know not what to do to prove my love to Jesus and be of some help to my brethren. Help Father.” Just then I vividly recalled what I said - so assuredly – to Sister Superior...“In His arms, He will teach me all things.” Once more I arise from despondency with a new courage and trust that my Beloved will never leave me nor forsake me – at all cost!

ACT SEVEN.

Hungry Hearts – Neophytes – Need of Leadership

Scene 1 – Twenty-four Persons – Farm Hospitality

Great weariness, bickering and uneasiness is creeping rapidly among some adults.

The children are becoming so very cantankerous and bedlam is noticeable. Surely leadership would help until further direction from above....

I ponder deeply, should I release the care of the children to each their own parents and slip away to some other endeavor? My heart's cry is, "Father! my only hope is your guidance in order to do your will, just like your son Jesus."

Scene 2 – Again Unprepared – Willing and Zealous I Venture

Within moments, I am overwhelmed with great peace and I muse, "For the love of Jesus, nothing can be too hard. Furthermore, I want to be just like you, my Saviour, even become a son of God. Matters not what trials await me, I am ordained to do my Father's will. I will venture leading the flock to you Jesus, so that we together will find the peace and rest only you can give. Is it not the only way to avoid bedlam?"

Fellow Sojourner, let's halt here a while before we walk through the scenarios in Memoir Vale. It involves the next ten years of my life (1994-2004) which were filled with momentous circumstances. As I perceive it now, I really believe that the true and living God always answers prayer over and above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us.

As I really ask “...to become like ***the only Begotten Son of God*** – and this at all cost,” I am led to drink the life-giving message (in *Isaiah 53*) of ***the suffering Saviour*** – precisely the man ***Christ Jesus***. It brought to me a greater reality and gratitude concerning the ordeals of those nine years on Prince Edward Island. The joys and sorrow – success and failure – applause and defamation which this weary tiny flock went through with me, is an opportunity to bow before ***God’s Sovereignty, enabling anyone to forgive unconditionally, which then generates the perfect love of God.*** His stage is set!

Let’s return to His marvelous ACTS.

Scene 3 - Major Disaster - Arson - Weird Activities

As the stage curtain rises on the month of May 1994, appears a sequence of scenes, eerie, destructive, accusing and mocking harassments. This prolonged “haunted” troublesome display promptly discloses its origin, therefore, excerpts from the “show-off” does suffice to explain the vexation in our midst – a poorly written note found in the milk-room of the dairy barn – “the barn will burn down at 3:00 PM tomorrow.

The next day, regardless the scrutiny of the setting, at three o’clock in the afternoon, fierce, devouring flames rapidly reduce the dairy barn to ashes. Unnatural activity continues such as, lights, stove and water taps come-on, screens fall from a few windows, the fridge opens and food is splattered on the floor, and much more...especially fires ignite spontaneously up to seven a day, anywhere – anytime.

Our plea for spiritual assistance from ministers of the gospel is to no avail. In fact everyone seems aloof and obviously fearful. One humble farmer comes in our midst with compassion. A true brother indeed who speaks a prophetic word which shortly comes to past and is still being fulfilled.

*And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a
flood after the woman, that he might cause her to
be carried away of the flood.*

*And the earth helped the woman, and the earth
opened her mouth,
and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast
out of his mouth.*

(Revelation 12:15-16)

Last but not least appear offensive writings on and inside the buildings – “Satan only does wondrous things” – “blind mice, you don’t even know what’s happening,” and sneering comments about the “cops.” All of these, we quietly and promptly scrub off.

In our spiritual immaturity we agree on calling the Police to our help. After many hours of extensive observation to detect any subtle human involvement, they leave extremely puzzled. Their spokesman is packing his protective gear in his car while he gives us a report, “This is beyond our ability to help you people, and I assure you that I do not want that even in my backyard.” Promptly they all leave.

The curtain closes on these repulsive scenes at the end of May. Now we are alerted to surrender two boys – ten and twelve years old – to Social Services to be placed in childless homes. Heart-breaking as it is, younger ones under eight must be protected from the influence of these unmanageable lads. This indeed is one of the most distressing situations concerning the May ordeal.

My Co-Wayfarer, let’s rest a while from this wearisome travel in Memoir Vale. As we partake of fine refreshment in this Manitoba modest home. I will share what favorable result came forth from this boisterous assailment.

Twenty years have elapsed bringing me into my ninetieth year, yet I clearly recall the mighty deliverance I experienced at that time. Powerfully and peacefully, I was shaken out of that terrible dread of Satan which had enslaved me since my early childhood. Certainly this “deadening” snare, still enchaining “millions,” is consequential to heretical doctrine about Satan being his “own” boss, and that God struggles to be able to handle him. As for me at that time, though in great love with my Saviour, I lacked revelation knowledge of Him. ***Jesus assures us that the Truth shall make us free*** (John 8:32).

The plan of God is perfect. ***God is love. The only true God is eternal and sovereign. He is the only creator even of evil, and Satan is His servant.*** Satanic attack against mankind is a powerful tool at God’s “beck-and-call” to steal, to kill and to destroy (John 10:10), while the Good Shepherd, our refuge, is right there by His Holy Spirit to assure us that He is come that we may have life and have it more abundantly. Without affliction, spiritual growth into sainthood is impossible. On the other hand fiery trials are essential to bring forth “Overcomers” (1 Peter 4:12-14)!

Let’s courageously return to Memoir Lane.

Scene 4 - An Awakening - Courage and Diligence

As we recover from those unnatural, offensive and destructive activities, we draw together seeking clear direction from Father God. By no means do we probe into these past events, but in faith we truly want wisdom to lineup with God’s purposeful leading.

The three men work steadily to erect four greenhouses on the farm which are soon in full operation. The older siblings gladly work with their parents, upkeeping the vines. However, after a few months these young adults become grumpy, and decide to leave home for what they see as greener pastures and more “normal religion.” Consequently, the workload of the twelve greenhouses

becomes extremely heavy. Household duties and the care of nine children under eight years old is the occupation of one mother and myself. Unknown to us is another stage-setting looming at the horizon. For God's little flock, this means a major transition.

Scene 5 - Dismantled - "Go Out Unto the Land..."

What seems to be a respite is short lived. It is time to seriously assess our essential purpose of this way of life. What could be our "Master Producer's" next Act in our shaken-up state? All I understand and know what to do – in God's present silence – is to be willing and obedient, trusting Him fully.

The older siblings now live away in the vicinity. There appears unhealthy incitings secretly attempting to draw away the younger children. Moreover, the Social Workers have been alerted that we spank the children and are now on our doorstep with a Policeman. Observing the setting for a few minutes, he declares, "There is nothing for me to do here" – and he leaves. The ladies lineup the children and endeavor to examine their bare buttocks for bruises. All eight younger ones timidly submit. Jonathan is seven and quietly protests, "I put my pants down for nobody!"

My Reader, as we break away for a while from the above episodes, let me share with you some costly yet priceless experience of lasting value.

Though the demonic "show-off" was trying, far more precious is the marvelous deliverance I received from my **Beloved Saviour** – that is freed from the dread of Satan. Now I have revelation of Isaiah 14:16, "...Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms." As well, I realized first-hand the precious truth concerning God's faithfulness. He said unto me, **"My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness"** (2 Cor. 12:9).

Let's go back to life on Memoir Lane.

Things are financially holding together by a “thread,” due to the loss of the dairy. Nevertheless, there appears to be much more peace, joy and courage. Regardless, the spiritual immaturity in us, our Father’s tiny flock, we are counting upon God’s intervention to give us a clear direction as to “His Perfect Plan.” Certainly, it is His loving mercy that we are being quiet and willing to do Father’s will “at all cost.”

Days go by uneventful, yet sometimes stressful, as moments of anxiety pervade concerning the future of our gathering. I personally know that *God never fails in accomplishing His marvelous Plan* – but I had so much to learn how to unlearn my innate trait of “Let’s go, now!” Moreover, I observe that each of the brethren – young and old – are very different concerning their spiritual walk. This too is an eye-opener in my desire that we all quickly become saints to reign.

With a new courage, let's return to “Memoir Lane. There, we will observe the awesome ability of the “Master Builder” to tear down and build on sound foundation.

Let's go!

Surely, our “Master Builder” must be encouraged seeing the result of His recent production. Not only myself, but His poor little flock also has learned some meekness, in as much as we were pressured to come to Him who is meek and lowly of heart. As well, we realize that fear of Satan is useless – for, “is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms...?”

Scene 6 – Destination – Island in Atlantic

Thirteen months have elapsed since those days during which surely we had tried to the ultimate. It is the 5th of July 1995 – the

little ones are in business in their huge sandbox, apart from sparse squabbles, they are quite content. We nine adults are gathered together, quietly wondering – what is next? We so, truly want to be our Father’s faithful children. I’m led to say, “Are we not ready to follow Jesus all the way – even go anywhere, anytime, any manner that our Father would lead us? Immediately, with a general nodding rose up assertions, vaguely expressing – forsaking all, and leave for new beginnings. Moreover, we unanimously agree that we know undoubtedly that all must be completed to leave the fifth of August – that is within one month.

Without “pros and cons” we call an auctioneer. There is an obvious sense of unity pervading in our midst. As spokesman, the owner of the main property, brings forth the request for Mr. Parson’s expertise in auction business and declares, “We are leaving and just everything must go, except few essentials, and that by August 5th.” “May I ask,” says Mr. Parson, “where are you all going (*18 persons*)?” “Sir, we do not know as yet,” is my response. “Have you thought of Prince Edward Island (*P.E.I.*)? There is a beautiful land, but no work opportunities – yet I do not know why I even mention this – as for the auction, call me, I’ll be here.” After a few words of conversation, the bewildered man leaves.

One of the brethren, a special God seeker, reveals his recent dream. “We were all hovering over the Island – looking down, I could see in huge letters “PEACE.” The eight adults proceed immediately, in serene joy, with the intense work involved for the auction – though, it is sure P.E.I. is our destination, we are completely oblivious that the stage is being set by divine maneuvering to bring forth major acts within the next nine-year scenario.

August 2 and 3 are the busy auction days – at much financial loss or not, all must go, except basics. We have read about Abraham in Genesis 12- 15, and we too are so delighted to obey and move on trusting God.

Scene 7 - Caravan - Nineteen Souls on a 3200-Mile Journey

August 4th, an improvised caravan is lined up: a U-Haul pulling a welder – the Buick – the maxi-van pulling the holiday trailer – a forty-eight passenger bus (having been transformed into a motor home) and the Ford – providing us with self-contained facilities. In a few hours, minutes after midnight, shall be the departure. Momentous indeed! Deep various mixed feelings are suppressed only by the mysterious serene joy of doing our heavenly Father's will. The sun is setting.

All of us together, standing in the midst of a totally desolate farm, yet neat and orderly, speechless we gaze at a prominent rainbow in the blue eastern sky. Each one, no doubt, attempts to seal the past ephemeral joys and deep scars, to courageously embark whole heartedly on stage, well set for a rise and fall. The beautiful Prince Edward Island definitely was the "Master Producer's" choice where we would allow our lives to be shipwrecked unto the purpose of God. Later, much later, I who had to be in the foreground scenario, would realize that no lives would be lost.

In the midnight hour, the caravan slips away unnoticed on a 3200-mile journey toward that quaint special little Island nestled in the Atlantic waves.... Without any mode of communication, the five vehicles steadily move on together. In route for twelve days, perhaps tedious for the tired adults, but quite enjoyable for the nine little ones. Every night around five o'clock the first R.V. resort available is our parking area. Favored with a transient home, the mothers prepare a hearty picnic setting while the children really enjoy running and exploring. With early retiring and early rising, we fare well.

Scene 8 - Set Foot on Red Soil - Nine-year Scenario

On August 17th at midday, we disembark the ferry. We've arrived on the Island – of the Red Soil. Parked by a motel, we wait

expectantly for a dwelling place of our Father's choice. The three men find work while we women care for children and keep house in this transitory setting. Within days, arrive on our doorstep, two Social Workers announcing their purpose, checking the condition and safety of our children, having been warned that I beat them.

Here is a short scene. Spontaneously, the nine little ones joyfully gather around the stunned workers, who soon gladly listen to their exuberant gibberish explanation of their wonderful trip. Comes the time for their rest period. Amazingly, with our simple reminder of such, off they are with a jump and a hop they disappear. The inspectors depart leaving this comment, "What beautiful children!"

In due time, the stage setting is in an old, large mansion on mid Island. Our life together will unravel in Hazel Grove on a small mini farm beside Highway 2. On one corner of the acreage, is a tiny "Take-out" with a "For Sale" sign. The owners spot us, and seem to know that now, they have a buyer. Let's remember, the stage is set with exquisite precision. Even though a few interludes will provide some respite, our "Master Producer's" momentous acts permeating these short nine years on the Island, will implode into a phenomenal excerpt in my long life. Pursuing Memoirs of this time, we notice that His handpicked Islanders are already on stage.

Ah! my patient Co-Wayfarer, are we not entitled to a little break? As we leap over space and time, let's rest a while in Manitoba. Let me expound on an interlude on this beautiful Island's arena.

Shortly after our arrival, there is an amazing sight after a warm beneficial rain, a magnificent rainbow arching from the far off horizon, anchors in the glistening green grass about three feet away from my feet. Seemingly it encircles the whole earth with a message of hope. Imagination? perhaps, nevertheless, it would become a source of reassurance during the dark days ahead.

Let's press on, as even in this Memoirs journey, is there not a mysterious expectancy? True, that no doubt your pertinent questions, precious Reader, and my tentative answers, interesting as they could be, must heed to the unfolding of "Our Sovereign Master's Plan."

Scene 9 – Businesses Flourish Mightily

The tiny "Take Out" is now ours. This is following quite some deliberation, as we are all clueless how to serve the people in that manner. Here we go again, "Father, help, we know not what to do!" Spontaneously, willing valiant Esther speaks up, "I believe, this 'wee' business is for us. For now it's about 'hot dogs' fries, ice cream and coffee, but if people desire more, we would feed them home cooking." The four ladies joyfully agree. The men in their calm way, vaguely signify, "Why not?" As for me, with my "inborn" Let's go! – the purchase is promptly done.

Such an unusual caravan! Eighteen people – three families with nine children under eight, and three single women... all taking residence in the same house and above all, no one goes to church.... The Islanders appear to be very close-knit, and in general any newcomers are the "From aways." Moreover, still echoes in the land rumbling sounds of the Jim Jones cult resulting in such tragedy. In love with our home setting, we have assurance of doing our Heavenly Father's will. A beautiful place years ago, is now in need of restoration. Very spacious is the house, yet the "cute" kitchenette of about 5' x 7' affixed to the south end – leaks with every rain.

The little "Take Out" is soon very busy and pleased customers plead for a "seating area." Homeschooling must be established in line with the P.E.I regulations. As small businesses (*all pertaining to service to the Islanders*) are developing rapidly in our midst, some transactions are needed, requested by Government. Unexpected and undesired, is my sitting at a Lawyer's feet with Daniel, Esther and Marie. This fine man, though somewhat bewildered, settles

things – A Communal Trust under “Four Winds Enterprise” – his white hands overlapped over his chest, he addresses Daniel in the manner, “Are you sure you want to forsake your property and blend in a Communal Trust?” Daniel answers, “Yes.” The Lawyer responds, “Well, sign this” – leaning back in his chair, holding his hands even tighter over his chest, he expresses a personal feeling, “I could never do that, I’ve got an idolatrous heart....”

My Fellow Sojourner, let’s halt here, and soar far beyond the live production which now lies dormant in the midst of Memoir Lane. Little did we have even an inkling that, I with a few brave hearts, had dared to launch out onto the great swelling tide of His Purpose. With patience and painstaking our “Sovereign Producer” had a stage-setting with everyone in place to take part in His answer to my cry of years ago, “Jesus, I want to know you, I want to see you and become like you, to love.”

It has been a matter of Crucifixion of what I had valued the most, since it is the price of spiritual understanding. Though my carnal mind raged at what seemed to me to be senseless destruction of what I had worked so diligently to bring forth, even to honor God, I had to give in. Only much later, would I understand this “secret recipe” to spiritual excellency, and the ONLY way to Resurrection.

Never, did I ever think I should let go my rights, and while I so abhorred the “blame game,” I had to play it to plead my cause, as I was still feeding on the tree of “good” and “evil.”

Let’s return to grasp excerpts of the most important events of the live tableau, set up by our “Expert Producer,” for good....

Somehow from now on, the group appearing as an unusual large family becoming effectively involved with the Islanders, is known as “the Four Winds!” Everyone, seemingly having forsaken their private financial affairs, are automatically free from that type of

worry. However, three trustees are voted in by the brethren, after our prayer for Father's guidance, Esther, Marie and myself are elected. Together we peacefully begin to see to financial affairs of Four Winds.

Obviously, expansions are needed, and I have ample opportunities to draw up plans, my delight! Favored with knowing the needs, and immediate clear vision of the finished work, facilitates the operation. A large kitchen is added to the home house, and the building is begun to transform the "Take Out" in a fifty-six seating place called "Four Winds Restaurant" – unique! It is by Highway 2 with mooing, grazing dairy cows close by. Customers love it!

WesowillingindeedtoserveGod,haventoheardaboutforsaking our own rights to rise in true love of the brethren. Regardless of the hardships of carnality, businesses are flourishing. As many as are able, we gather daily to read the Word of God, endeavoring to be encouraged in our walk.

Scene 10 – My Failing Health – Great Eye-Opener

As for me, my health, it is failing, and having been with the group for some time under Prosperity Gospel, I procrastinate to get Medical Help. I struggle with weakness, but continue the best I can to oversee the children, who are relatively good!

One evening, having settled the little ones, I lay on the next bed for a little rest. I open my eyes the next morning, and Esther is beside me. I've suffered a brain concussion, and have been unconscious for ten hours. I was found immediately after my brethren heard me fall from the top of a fifteen-step stairway. My memory returned gradually after a few months.

After sometime, the pain in my stomach area being so intense, I must see a doctor. His diagnosis is a non-functioning thyroid and a huge hiatal hernia, ready to rupture. This fine elderly

English Doctor says it as it is, so at least, everyone knows exactly what he detects. “When I first saw you, I saw a woman full of cancer, ready to fall on her death bed, but here are two kinds of medication, there is hope,” he clearly states. Within a short time, I am considerably improved, and pressing on to be fully functioning again in as much as I perceive what Father has for me to do.

Shortly after, the children, so thrilled over a newborn calf beg me, “Come, come Lucille, please come with us to see it,” they plead already helping me, one on each arm. Off I am to the barn. A nice calf indeed, but what price I will have to pay. As I turn, tripping on the side of the gutter, I slash my knee. As blood poisoning is rapidly invading, I must return to Dr. Ellis again, who confirms what I already feel. “Well Lucille, here is the strongest antibiotic available – if it doesn’t work, you’re a “dead duck,” he states with precision in his dry humor, adding, “hot salt fomentations and complete bedrest.”

After ten days, I’m on the mend. It is worth it all as it is an important stage-setting for me to discover hidden treasures.... The older children, now being twelve, eleven, and nine, are tender and at my beck-and-call. A special mention concerning Mirianna, nine, so very “bucky” as a toddler, she is now growing up to be a fine young maiden. Except for an occasional “moody” streak, she is quite mature. During the ten days I am bedridden, she not only caters to me, handles all basic housekeeping duties, but amazingly, she “oversees” the sandbox busy crew – “two girls of three years old, and two boys of five and leader girl of six.

Precious Mirianna, I hear her from my room, “You little children, come in for meal, or for your bath,” or she goes out for “run games” with them. Then occasionally, imitating me, she finally does settle their little squabbles. The phone is beside me, and a mother from the restaurant would rescue us in moments.

As for me, in my alcove, I ponder deeply – the restaurant is already becoming prestigious Island wide. As well, three huge

tourist camps applaud Four Winds for the excellent service of campfire wood delivered on site. The egg-grading station supplies fresh eggs to various restaurants, including our own. Moreover, we are surrounded with praise and appreciation, even some proclaim, “How wonderful are the people of Four Winds...” and the money is pouring into the common fund.

In as much as I truly love and enjoy every one of these nine children, I question continuing my charge of them much longer. Back functioning as before, I am alerted to a definite discrepancy – the wealth compared to our spiritual progress....

ACT EIGHT.

Remarkable Fame – The “Four Winds” People

Scene 1 – Physical Abundance – Spiritual Dullness

At “Four Winds,” if externally it appears clear sailing, internally there is poverty and seemingly dullness in the spiritual realm. A few members have not wavered from their vibrant love for our Saviour, but since dissension and a mocking spirit is rising up in our midst, disintegration is threatening. Secrecy and boisterousness indicate very unhealthy invasion. Though I perceive the matter, it is obvious that God has a purpose in it all, and that I must be still and not meddle with God’s ongoing Mighty Acts.

Scene 2 – Jonathan’s Conversion – His Death

Through all this, the oldest child, Jonathan now twelve years of age, receives a touch of God. Unexpectedly, he barges into the house pouring the reason of his rage upon me. Apparently Simon Peter had kicked a fabricated play cart that obstructed the shop door, and it was Jonathan’s idol.... What could I do for this child pale with anger declaring, “I hate him – I’ll never, never forgive him.” Peacefully, I speak life-giving words trusting God will intervene, “Jonathan, Jonathan, remember how Jesus loved you and died for you. For the love of Jesus forgive Simon Peter.” He disappears to find Simon in the other room. What a scene! There they weep in each other’s arms. Jonathan is transformed into a “new creation” – what a deep conversion!

During the few months before his death, Jonathan shows fast-progressing spiritual maturity which is abruptly interrupted by his death, caused by a rare blood disease (*ITP*). Our great loss

is his escape from the oncoming catastrophic shipwreck of the “Four Winds People.” God gives and takes away!

At this time, 1999 begins great sorrows for Father’s downcast and weary little flock. Esther, Marie and myself, elected trustees by our brethren, move together as overseers for the benefit of all members. By far, our priority is to be an ensample to the brethren. God’s Mighty Act in Jonathan’s life stirred us powerfully in re-assessing, not only our own sincere love for Lord Jesus, but also what more could we do concerning an “undercover” spirit permeating in our midst? We see uneasiness mounting. It is definitely obvious that only God is able and will handle this ambiguous, grievous and threatening matter.

Precious Co-Sojourner, let’s soar beyond this tableau in Memoir Vale – far from “shadow of death” to rest a while in the oasis of peace, quietness and assurance forever!

I am overwhelmed with amazement how our Sovereign dear heavenly Father brings His own through fiery trials of their faith...even if He has to rise up...that he may “bring to pass his strange act...” therefore, “be not mockers – lest your bands be made strong” (Isaiah 28:21-22).

Now after many years, I understand the reason for God’s shakings in my life, as He did on the Island.

We must return to Memoir Vale where God’s strange act continues to unfold.

Scene 3 – Stage Set – Concerned Fearful Sibling – Intruders

Here is another beautiful “fall day” of the year 2000, indeed favoring the flow of customers at “Four Winds Restaurant.” All my brethren are almost overwhelmed by the required service. As for me, I am alone at the home-house with the young children, quietly fulfilling household duties. The other four are helping their parents either at the restaurant or at the fire-wood lot.

In mid-afternoon, older siblings from Western Canada are on our door-step. Obviously, this is not a friendly visit, but great uneasiness pervades their furtive roaming the property and private “talks.” Their interest is mainly to their father and siblings. As for me, a great sorrow of heart is invading deep within.... On their arrival, they are gladly well fed at the restaurant. Towards evening we all gather for supper at home, after which they leave abruptly. We remain speechless.

Something offensive has mingled with the discordance already lingering. Here I am, disheartened and puzzled. There lies before me God’s Mighty Acts even Strange Acts, bringing forth continuous dealings in my life span during which I will get to know God “experientially.”

Scene 4 - Desperate Cry, “Father Intervene”

Several months are gone by, heavily strewn with severe bouts of rebellion and mocking in our midst. This is heart-rending for me, as I realize my inability to steer aright this deep-seated and far-reaching matter. Frequently “edgy” – I need more love!

We have gathered around our large dining table to read the Bible and pray. The reading, boisterously interrupted by a particular few – a father mocking and children giggling – is a signal of importance. Spontaneously, with my hands lifted up and a deep heart-cry I plead, “Father, please remove these wicked spirits from our midst without or with the people involved. Thank you Father, for answering my prayer in the name of Jesus!” In complete silence and soberness, everyone withdraws quietly....

Remaining alone in this impressive, consequential ambiance, prostrated before the Almighty, I hear within me a still small voice, “Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid (*Mark 6:50*). “Jesus, surely this is you in me, the hope of glory, and I believe that you never leave me – even when I get so perturbed...,” I muse.

Scene 5 - God's Mighty Act - Dismantlement

In early July, a ten-year-old girl cannot be found. The police are unable to find her. A phone call from an older sibling from Alberta, "We have Rhea." The Social Workers become involved. Similarly, two others, a nine and a twelve year old are lured to go back to the West. Daniel is obviously so very uneasy, unsettled, seems so angry with Esther. As concerned brethren, in the evening of July 24th we gather around him in readiness to hear him out. He is definitely in great fear, bursting out with, "It's out of hand, I'm leaving."

Esther and I are unable to sleep, and attempt to comfort one another in prayer and compassion – we are bewildered! After a night's sleep, Daniel refuses breakfast, demands all the cash in the house and departs with the pick-up truck, his welding outfit, and all the tools he wanted from the shop. By 10 AM, he's gone. We, the six adults, arise from this painful blow to comfort the children so very dismayed.

In the afternoon, about 2:00 PM, four Policemen and three Social Workers arrive suddenly, and within less than fifteen minutes, the five remaining children are apprehended. This is some heart-rending estrangement. A nine-year-old attempts to hide behind a chair, one seven-year-old girl stands erect, hands flat on the table and speaks boldly, "I'm not going." The male social worker seems angry and fearful. He points to the door, waiting for her to move. The two twelve-year-old girls are weeping, the other seven year-old leaves happily, as her mother decides to leave with the social workers. Here we are, three single women, and a couple. This little flock of five persons will sustain heavy trials.

These little ones are informed that we are wicked, and that they are in danger, specifying the reason for an emergency cutoff, and that they won't return. Completely stripped from our lively jewels is desolation indeed! Speechless, each one must find

solace in our Father's presence, alone with Him, until our hearts are somewhat comforted.

Shattered we are! Could it be possibly just a nightmare? No, it is not, but my carnal mind is trying to patch things up. Through it all, in our ongoing desire for God, we experience a closeness and an ever increasing trust in God. Our "serene" Master Builder continues His Mighty Act of ***tearing down, to rebuild on a sound foundation***, as He is sure of a successful outcome. Life continues on the desolate acreage. Though we are harassed by hungry Media – yet it is definitely part of the stage-setting to bring forth ***God's purposes***.

These past six years slip away, leaving the stage for our Sovereign Producer's next setting, in which I become the feature, as needed for His Mighty Act. He requires time, space, and willing hearts in earthen vessels, to bring many ***sons to glory***. As a creator, a transformer and a restorer, He ignored my soulish agonies and unbearable heartbreaks from betrayal and rejection, forerunners of crucifixion – the only avenue to Agape Love! (*Since I am mixing together "law" and "grace," my mind is still imbued with religiosity of heretical doctrine – a divine earthquake is well begun to set me on sound foundation.*)

Scene 6 – Terrifying Bandits – Leave in Sudden Fear

After a heavy day's work, Simon and Hannah are away to help a lady in her home. The evening as usual has a dusky atmosphere. Marie, Esther and I have just begun to read Psalm 119. As we read verse 53 – "Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked..." when with a weird howling, two bandits assault us. Within moments we're on the floor, hands and feet bound with duct tape. One tears out the phone line, while the other commands with a terror-stricken cry, "Let's get out of here!" – and they're gone, but so is our Van.

Somewhat shaken, we remain very quiet, a few moments in

His Presence awaiting His next lead. Esther liberates one hand (*tape being over her long-sleeve sweater*), then frees us promptly.

Scene 7 - Criminal Charge - Supreme Court

The next incidence, two Policemen deliver me a summons to appear at the Supreme Court, with a criminal charge of having assaulted five young children. Speechless, I take the document, and they depart. Dropping the sheet on the table, I look around in a daze, as this one surely must be a bad dream....

Scene 8 - Blessing of True Brethren

Beside me is my precious brother, Simon Peter. He had come from his work outside, to be with me for this unheralded business. What is there to say...except he reads to me the Law order in detail.... It is not a dream... and there is no human escape.... With a compassionate gaze, Simon leaves me alone with God. Though initially propelled into a state of self-pity-heart-break mixed with justification, I am quickened by my recent plea, “Father, I want to be like your beloved Son Jesus, to love just like Him – whatever it takes....

The stage is set, no turning back. God is about to destroy my determined confidence in my own convictions. The curtain is rising on a sequence of momentous Acts in shadowy vales....

ACT NINE.

Four Winds People – Famous to Infamous

Scene 1 – All Businesses Fall Overnight

How ephemeral has been the fame of the restaurant and that of the “Four Winds People.” Recalling our beginning on the Island a few years ago, it is astounding how the Four Winds Restaurant came to be through the genuine combined efforts of this group. Along with other businesses developing, legally we became known as “Four Winds Enterprise and Communal Trust.” At the height of its phenomenal renown, comes its catastrophic downfall. Indeed the stage had been set to steadily bring forth scenes with no turning back. Our Good Shepherd’s gathering of five is forlorn in this disastrous aftermath of His eternally purposeful “earthquake.”

As for me, echo in my heart words of Life – could it be a shaking needed for me to move on higher and firmer ground? Prophetic words we so often read together give me a new courage.

Scene 2 – A Still Small Voice Through It All

However, the soon oncoming ordeal of my appearance as a criminal at the Supreme Court is crashing into my sphere. Heeding to a sound direction – “In their affliction they will seek me early,” Hosea 5:15 – my only solace is to remain dumb with a hearing ear in the stillness of His Presence. Would this slough of failure really be needed for me to receive the spirit-seed of Agape-love? Deep within my being resound these mysterious promises, “And I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places...” Isaiah 45:3.

Clamorous rumors rapidly spread far and wide, the sudden gloom of “Four Winds.” A morbid fear grips the citizens since we are legally classed as “wicked” and that Lucille is a “cult” leader. The businesses are soon no more. Amazingly, a few “brave hearts” who perceive beyond “the hearsay and disastrous circumstances,” become more than ever our precious faithful friends until this day.

*Scene 3 - Father's Broken-Hearted “Little” Flock Draws
Closer to Him*

Since Court Sessions are booked a year from now, I endeavor to blot this painful coming event out of my mind. Doubtless that our sojourning in P.E.I. will soon be over. Liquidation of this property is most overwhelming. Regardless how disheartening this is, we must proceed, beginning with dismantling of what has been left behind by the brethren who are gone.

As for us, five perplexed and deeply hurting little folk, encourage each other to keep trusting our Heavenly Father through it all. Often, we gather together at the end of the “large” family table, to read the Life-giving Word of God. There we receive the PEACE that Jesus promised to revive our weary souls - **the PEACE only He can give**. We have no knowledge how the billows will continue to roll, yet our prayer is to the God of our life. Yes, through it all we attempt, in the midst of grief, to sing wholeheartedly and with new willingness.

**Arise and go down to the Potter's House,
And there you shall hear my Word.**

**Behold, as the clay is in the Potter's Hands,
So are you here, in my Hand.
Mold me Lord, on your Potter's Wheel;
I want to be your vessel.
Heal me Lord, and I shall be healed,
As I rest here, in your Hand.**

My precious Reader, let's soar beyond these abysmal memories – take some refreshment befitting to our arduous sojourning. Bear with me, I must pour, from my heart, overflowing excerpts from unsuspected events. Through it all, my trust is in He who answers exceeding abundantly above all that I ask or think, according to power that works in me.

The vehement plea to Abba Father, “To be like Jesus, to love like Him,” stirred His Heart. Moving swiftly into another one of His own productions as the all-wise God, He proceeds into a special transforming and restoring work within me. I so desire to know the ***love of Christ which passes knowledge*** that I might be filled with the fullness of God. That which I had often read – now it is to ***know Him “experientially.”***

Let's return to “Memoirs.”

*Scene 4 - Weeks in Supreme Court Sessions -
Voracious Media*

Court days are now upon me. At eight o'clock that Monday morning, in my ordinary attire, clean and modest, I sit silent, behind our Lawyer, toward the back of the court room. Behind me, when allowed, are Esther, Marie, Simon Peter and Hannah with a few sympathetic folks who endure with me, five weeks of testifying against me.

The five allegedly assaulted children, appear in the witness stand, one by one, to be questioned by the Prosecutor, concerning the matter. What an opportunity for me to learn from it all. The deftness of the Prosecutor's questions, well exposes inconsistencies in many of their answers. Before me is also, the forceful exhortations from the Judge and the Prosecutor, “Child, no lying – if you lie you don't know what could happen to this accused.” Seemingly, the four first witnesses are not realizing the seriousness of it all, but revel over such attention. The last one, a boy of ten comes in sad and fearful. For him, one of the questions

is, “Child, do you really hate Lucille?” Fixing his tearful eyes on me, he answers, “I don’t hate Lucille, but I like Lucille.” For this child, it is a short questionnaire....

Next are three parents whose children were apprehended. This is a vast opening to express their disappointment.... Had they not gladly walked with me in security as God’s people, with the faith of Abraham? or leaning on me....? One after another in the witness stand, responding to pertinent questions reveals fear, anger, and insecurity.

While divulging my numerous inadequacies and failures – real or exaggerated – regardless, it is absolutely within the scope of the scenario. Surfacing from a deep well, is pain, grief, damage and confusion, which re-echoes in my own heart as another shattering experience.

My Wayfarer, is it not quite a privilege to be able to slip away so easily – from fear and stressful reminiscing – to a haven of mental quietness and peace of hearts.

Overwhelmed with good will, I had read the words of Jesus studiously, really wanting to be impeccable and pleasing to God – I was so glad to be a new creation. Assuring my Heavenly Father how thankful I was to “know” Jesus, and for so great salvation, I’ll be wherever God would have me – be very humble, leave everyone’s life alone, love and hold on to my own rights!!! Outwardly, I surely had left religion, but my carnal mind, still infested with fragments of what I had left behind, that is, morbid fear and lies in hypocrisies was my sly deadly enemy.

Simultaneously, I am mightily cherished by Jesus Christ, who seems blindly in love with His purchased possession. Does He ignore the nauseating decomposition of my carnal nature? Later I would understand that its decay serves as a powerful fertilizer, favoring the growth of the “new life” springing forth in my present human frame – a work of grace!

Precious Reader, let's return to Memoir lane to see how the live tableau will unfold before us the next scene revealing a divine purpose. God's "evil" is so powerful to bring forth an ever increasing knowledge of the love of God and a humble spirit.

Let's go!

Scene 5 - Spanking Children - Unlawful

Still under the trampling effect of the recent weeks of daily accusations – here I am on the witness stand. What to expect I know not, but I purpose to answer all questions in total honesty, remembering, it's about “spanking and assaulting” – no self-justification, no disclosing anyone else's pedigree. The most intriguing questions are no match for answers spoken in truth and love. I realize that, far from being accomplished in this matter, my only hope is the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Far from being overjoyed, I am fearless, serene and peaceful. I vividly recall, when in darkness, the power of the “Flicker,” ***Jesus loved me and died for me – nothing can be too hard with Love.*** As all are quietly waiting for the Judge, I am in a perfect place to observe the setting. The gallery is packed with observers. In prominence on the Judge's desk, is our “spanker's tool” – is it becoming a “memorable?”

Comes to mind a precious event of a few years ago. Daniel had worked diligently to prepare a disciplinary tool out of spruce – a 14” x 2” x 1/2” board. As he presented it to me for my use, he explains, “Look, Lucille, I rounded the edges, so as not to hurt them unduly. Also, I carved out one end for ease to your hand,” and he disappears. I muse, “Is this man really Daniel?” What tenderness!

With the Judge now present, the scenario unfolds.... The Prosecutor proceeds, “Miss Poulin, did you spank the five children in question, and assault them, and why?” “Sir, I did spank those

children, for persistent naughtiness, such as disobedience, lying, stealing, cruelty to one another and mockery. One exception to my only way of spanking, is a firm swat over the blankets covering Mirianna's seat...as she had ignored some three loud callings for breakfast. Pouting, she gets up, eats breakfast, and files into the group of vibrant children. As for assaulting them, I never even had a desire to harm them," is my reply.

He questions, "Now, explain and demonstrate your spanking procedure," as he hands me the rod from the desk, standing near me, he waits for action. I state, "Sir, I'll explain, but to demonstrate, I have the rod yet no offender." Promptly pulling in a padded chair, he concludes, "This will suffice." I proceed, "The eight adults of our gathering, followers of our obedient Saviour, purpose to obey God rather than man. Following God's Word concerning raising children, this is what we understand, in our level of love. To answer the question, Why spank children, at all, not even for their naughtiness? – the essential reason is to obey our divine guideline:"

*He that spareth his rod hateth his son:
but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."*
(betimes - promptly and quickly, early enough – Webster
Dictionary)
(Proverbs 13:24)

*Chasten thy son while there is hope,
and let not thy soul spare for his crying.*
(Proverbs 19:18)

*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child;
but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."*
Proverbs 22:15

“Now proceeding to spank a child is for me, a consequential endeavor, and for the child, it is the outcome of his behavior.” I explain, “(name), we will both obey – I’ll give, and you receive, OK? Lean over this chair.... Then comes three swats on his clothed seat,” (as I use the padded chair). “He cries, but if he ‘bucks,’ he’ll get a few more blows. Each one knows that if this does not work, Daddy will take over when he comes in. The usual response being, ‘No, no Lucille, you do it – I’ll obey’ – such spontaneous willingness accompanying their plea, solves the whole ordeal.”

“Now this is as I see the management of the aftermath – (Name), it’s all over! As the child arises, I embrace him, specifying, Lie flat on the floor, forehead on your wrists and ask Jesus, your Saviour to help you, then, it really is all over, you’re free.” Handing the rod to the Prosecutor, we both return to each our post.

Scene 6 - My Personal Life Pattern - Main Issue

The following several days, are spent answering intricate questions, in a cross-examination manner. All deals with my personal life pattern and my function among this “heard of” very unusual gathering of parents and children. What is there to answer, but to say it simply as it is, “Unforeseen circumstances brought me in the midst of neophytes, who had a great desire to serve the **True and Living God**. Having left their regular life-style, they asked to live on the farm with us – the family where I was invited to live. Together completely separated from every organized religion, we wanted to live only with Jesus Christ, our Savior – become saints and be a blessing around us. Reading the Bible together and trying hard to obey it to the letter was not sufficient.”

Scene 7 - God’s Mighty Act - Tear Down to Rebuild

Being the senior – (physically and somewhat spiritually) – I am the one to get “shaken off” that sand foundation in order that

my spiritual house be well established on the Rock – our Lord Jesus Christ.

The evening in our quiet home, we, five, spend precious moments together. Here, we are comforted by God’s Life-giving word. In all our bewilderment, we endeavor to encourage one another. As for me, it seems even unthinkable that I should be jailed on “hearsay.” I reason....had I forgotten my ardent plea, “to become just like Jesus?”

Scene 8 - Verdict - Incarceration - Eight Months

The rest of the sessions consist of intricate questions, which end with a verdict, “Incarceration for eight months and three years under probation.” I am handcuffed and taken to Sleepy Hollow Jail....

My Precious Co-Wayfarer, aren't we glad that this part of the ordeal is ended? As we fly from these prison walls, spanning time and space, let's enjoy pleasant moments in Manitoba. In this oasis of peace and freedom, where I now live with Esther and Daniel, let's be refreshed and restored from our wayfaring on Memoir Lane, rather rocky, yet priceless!

Within recent years, the **Kingdom gospel – with its vibrant message of hope for every man** – through the great **reconciliation and restoration of all things**, brings to me an unknown **freedom in Christ**. For me, true freedom and deep peace of heart and soul, is the greatest treasure on earth. It is when I believed in the absolute **Sovereignty of God** and the destiny of man, that joy and revelation increased.

Though I had **salvation** when I believed that my **sins were unconditionally forgiven**, I needed to go through suffering that seemed futile and senseless. Then I began to see into the spirit realm. Amazingly, comes a greater clarity concerning this truth when I suffered for sin “in me.” God destroyed my addiction

to “evil,” and when He brought me into suffering for sin “against me,” God slew my addiction “to good,” thus freeing me to abide in the ***Tree of Life***.

Amazing how this operation of the ***Holy Spirit translates “new creation beings” from Church Age Gospel to the Kingdom*** that is within me. This is the everlasting gospel! Here is by no means a teacher’s manual. I am just sharing how the ***“good news” of the Kingdom Age*** falls on me as a dew, even so as a soft rain, and as I ascribe our God’s excellent greatness. I also proclaim that the scenario of every ***“Overcomer”*** bears the signet of the King: THE CRIB – THE CROSS – THE CROWN.

Precious Reader, bear with me as I relate one of my most outlandish doings when still in addiction to “good.” Example:

There is a request for a Registered Nurse (R.N.) to administer morphine injections to the men on drugs who appear at a “rescue home.” This is for the most unmanageable. I volunteered to take the midnight to eight o’clock shift. It is a beautiful August night and as arranged, at 11:30 PM that memorable night, I’m riding through the city with a male, but kind stranger. After the first injection to one of the men, (in infernal desperation), my back to the open door, I am listening to the young male guard at his desk.

Suddenly he grows pale and cries out, “Oh! my God, we’ve had it....” Turning to see, I meet face to face with the Chief of Hell’s Angels gang. “What are you doing here?” he growls. “Sir, I just came to try and help these poor men,” is my quiet response, secure in my “great deed!” “Ridiculous, they all deserve to die, and I’ll see to that,” he retorts, yet hesitating for a moment, he grumbles, “but I never kill in the presence of a woman,” and they’re gone.

Of course, I did not go back to that place. Yet propelled by an avidity to be outwardly involved in some good deed, I truly believed I was pleasing God. Even after several years of being truly saved, I was still living in the tormenting stage of the ***“tree***

of good and evil.” It was obvious that God had to confine me to a corral, the prison, to nation-wide ridicule and defamation to accomplish His eternally purposeful Plan.

Let's return with a new courage to “Prison Memoirs”

Alarmed is the prison nurse, as this seventy-eight year old convict arrives with a blood pressure of 200. Promptly, I am brought through jail procedures – that is, stripped bare in the presence of two young female guards, thoroughly examined for “drug carrying,” then given the uniform apparel of the one-size fleece-lined shirt and pants, and runners. In kindness, I’m assigned to a cot in the library with a special guard.... I am soon asleep.

Beside me is my Bible which a female Psychiatrist had graciously received from one of the four “brave hearts,” Simon Peter, Hannah, Esther and Marie. They had faced one more time, the shame of their association in following the jail vehicle, with its criminal, up to the prison door. One important fact must be assessed which is done by one question from this Professional of the mind, “Lucille, did you ever attempt suicide,” she asks with an extreme soberness. Quite rested, I respond zestfully, “Oh, indeed, but certainly not since I know Jesus.” This ended all Psychiatric attention, and I saw her no more....

Our Master Producer persistently sets His Stage to successfully bring forth His mysterious, and marvelous Act. Silently and timely the curtain rises on this peculiar scene. Sitting in a confining corral, is a physically exhausted seventy-eight year old ex-nun, having traversed extremely rugged terrain, in relentless pursuit of her Beloved. When found, she plunged into strenuous works to prove Him her love, all led to becoming afflicted with a criminal charge with court sessions and verdict – “Incarceration for eight months,” followed by three years of probation. A “little” volume would hardly suffice to relay my stay in “Sleepy Hollow” prison.

At this time, I must refrain myself to sharing excerpts only. However, the learning gained therein could not have occurred anywhere else....

- A young guard leads me to the library. As we walk the dark grey walls of the aged Bastille, she conveys a heart message, “Lucille, have a “rest” from the hungry Media!” Officials have wisely ordered this for your safety – the library with a personal guard. This is until such a time as needed to deal with an inmate on ward, a “news lover” who is bound to kill such “a very wicked woman.”
- The fifth day, fearless, I follow my guard to the ward. Introduced to my four co-offenders, I greet each one peacefully. Obviously the guards are really “on guard” while I am about “my Father’s business” – no problem....
- A special mention of the kindness I received from the entire staff, and also that shown to my visiting folks. Just to mention, my fifty year old genuine care worker assures me that the verdict of eight months is now five and one-third.
- The evening of my arrival in library – two male Officials carry in a padded arm chair and an extra blanket for me – What bounty!
- Two valorous women are confined for several days. They whose acquaintance should eventually become quite an appreciated permanent friendship is amazing.
- Most of my days are spent alone in my cell, sitting on my cot crocheting, my tear-filled eyes turn to the Bible on my lap. None of the external ordeals equate the deep inconsolable sorrow of heart concerning the sharp estrangement of so many loved ones. Even the four “brave hearts,” who

stand with me in love, do experience a degree of hurt and disappointment. “We thought we could trust Lucille....” No wonder all had to crash, as all I desired was as Father’s little flock, we would be a holy people quickly made ready for heaven.” Astounding, yet unknown to me then, this type of personal failure is a blessing in disguise.

With no human escape, ***my Beloved has me in His own courts*** to speak comfortably unto me in a manner I am able to grasp, “This shaking is that those things that cannot be shaken may remain.” Unfit for heavy instruction, I gladly heed His ***“Come away, my Beloved.”*** Alone, so alone with Him in the Magnitude of His Presence, I surrendered. As a lamb severely wounded from my entanglements, now rescued, a refugee in His Everlasting Arms, I began to learn from Him true humility, and more of ***His great Love – “Agape.”***

My dear Reader, this 17th of April 2003 very early this morning, a guard will, in moments, escort me on my departure from prison. Those precious four brethren who are waiting for me, drive me home secretly, for protection from all publicity, another kindness to me.

Let’s transfer promptly from “releasing prison doors” to my present oasis on this acreage in Manitoba. A little rest and a hearty refreshment is most appropriate following such a unique phase of my life.

After twelve years, as I gaze in this panoramic Memoir, I’ll share briefly how I see it now.

As aforementioned, I had tried hard with much love, but very intensely with my “Let’s go” trait, to serve God, and somewhat prod-on, willing hearts who desired to join us. To me, at this time, it was a matter of making a beeline toward heaven for an eternity with God. Falling flat on my face, the Master Producer’s

Mighty Act is coming to pass. Shaken off my own foundation, He corrals me to humble me, to prove me and to do me good in the latter end. It means wilderness for a time.

With Light, Life and Love, my Beloved brings me to His banqueting table in the ***Kingdom realm***. This enables me to walk steadily in self-sacrifice in unconditional forgiveness and unconditional love. This is becoming real, as I finally forsake my own rights and begin to believe and rejoice with thanksgiving in ***the Sovereignty of God, who will restore the whole creation through the Lord Jesus and His Christ – the manifested sons of God.***

This my carnal mind is unable to grasp as it is given by revelation. O those blessed moments when in the stillness of His Magnificence I hear the joyful sound – the Jubilee is at hand!

Let's return to Memoir Vale.

Scene 9 - Home Again - Sorrow of Heart Continues

A quiet exodus from prison confine, leading to a joyful reunion with my brethren is short lived, but is severely dampened by the sorrow facing Simon Peter and Hannah. The Social Workers purpose to remove, at birth, their third child to protect him from Lucille. We are faced with another estrangement. Simon Peter, Hannah and baby depart back to their homeland.

Scene 10 - Nationwide Defamation and Mockery

Still under the impact of defamation and mockery nationwide, I am extremely down-hearted. Self-justification dies hard – how could this happen? Moreover, my abruptness with these precious parents, as they are pressed to depart by the above mentioned circumstances, causes them extra grief. It is quite another learning for me. Having great revelation on the beauty of

holiness and the resurrection power to make one an overcomer, requires meekness and willingness to forsake one's own rights.

Sharp arrows pain my heart which I brought upon myself through my own immaturity. Esther, Marie and I remain as three sparrows alone in the midst of this deserted complex. Receiving comfort through prayer and a renewed closeness to one another, we arise, complete all transaction covering the property and heed gladly to our Father's next leading.

ACT TEN.
Prince Edward Island Memoir Ends –
A Bridge to Cross

Scene 1 – Three Privileged Women Quietly Leave P.E.I.

It is all over for us on this beautiful and quaint island. Esther, Marie, and I gaze at a slow moving van. It is well packed with our household needs and is drawing away toward our recently purchased bungalow home in Red River Valley, Southern Manitoba. After intense hearty moments with a few genuine friends we slip away at dusk to a secluded motel.

Scene 2 – Crossing the Confederation Bridge for the Last Time.

Early on the 20th of April 2004, we span the Northumberland Strait in peace. While still somewhat mixed up with “law” and “grace,” we almost shake-off the dust from our feet, but we refrain.... Even though our Royal Blue van is stamped “infamous” by some Islanders, it purrs on transporting this “Trio” leisurely half-way across Canada, to the door of our future abode.

Scene 3 – Red River Valley Destination

We are home, willingly disregarding the nasty stir against us aroused by the News Media. Now we are brought on stage for our Father’s next “Mighty Acts” where we settle with wonderful villagers on the Eastern bank of the Red River. The Mayor, with few wise words, calms the storm.

Together, in our peaceful and quiet dwelling, we spend hours in fellowship and reading our Bible attentively.

Scene 4 – God’s Mighty Acts – Momentous!

Within months, Marie becomes deathly ill with cancer. As she cries unto Abba Father to show her the reason of this affliction, she realizes that there is unforgiveness and grudges in her heart. In response to her humble plea for mercy from Father God, she experiences divine power to forgive unconditionally. Marie is mightily blessed, the pain is gone, and she is progressively healed of terminal cancer. Moreover, within a short time, long-awaited reconciliation break-forth, another healing for her aching heart!

As I witness these momentous events, it becomes a catalyst, hastening my own healing. Still in much misunderstanding of my heavenly Father’s **beneficent** plunder, while in Prince Edward Island, I am rather unsettled. As I press on in ordinary daily living, praising God for His mighty acts, even His strange acts, amazingly I also receive the power to forgive unconditionally, and increased revelation of Agape – God’s very substance unconditional Love! Precious! this served for the next stage settings!

For the first time, we are given the privilege to hear some basic teaching on **Kingdom Life**. It is as a morning dew upon hungry hearts.

For some time, Esther and I realize that we must meet the family – her children – in Alberta. Our Sister Marie receives a pressing message while in prayer, that we are to make this trip immediately, stating that she will remain at home. Esther and myself are soon on our way toward Alberta. We trust being able to bring some “balm” to an ongoing apparently unrepairable rift. We draw near to this distressed group unheralded, without fear, and with that quiet and meek forgiving Spirit right from the heart of Christ Jesus.

Personally, I am overwhelmed at the timeliness and lovingkindness of our Father’s proceedings in this particular matter. Though Esther and I lacked in spiritual knowledge,

comforted by the Holy Spirit, we continue to obey in love and compassion. Harboring bitterness brings sorrow of heart. Endless would be the sharing of what we saw externally as each one attempts to respond through their aching hearts.

Our mission seems ended. However, the night before our departure, two sons arrange a meeting for their father and mother. Daniel comes from his lonely basement suite. As casual as the meeting appears with a few words of mutual forgiveness, it will soon unravel in restoration! Somewhat stunned, yet wonderfully peaceful, we return uneventfully to our quiet home with joyful Marie.

My Co-Wayfarer, now five years later, the stage curtain closes, ending our ninety-year "Memoir" journey. Together, let us rest a while in my quiet sanctuary from where we can admire Esther and Daniel's willingness to go through the refining fires needed for healing their once hopelessly shattered marriage. Moreover, this upward bound in the power of the Holy Spirit coming from the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, is gradually fulfilling God's eternal purpose.

God's holy people are elected to be made ministers – "a flame of fire." This "a flame of fire" puzzled me for a long time, also that "God is a consuming fire." When revelation knowledge flooded my spirit concerning "Christ in me the hope of glory," amazingly this gave a death blow to the long tenacious doctrinal aberration that plagued my ancestors, and myself. In fact, we know about sectarian rivalry of denominations, while there is only ONE WAY, ONE TRUTH, and ONE LIFE; that is ONE TRUE DEITY – the only one of divine nature, the essence of whom is LOVE. Love in turn is generated by forgiveness and self-sacrifice.

Let's return to Memoir Lane, as the curtain rises on the fading arc of my walk through darkness.

Concerning this "trio," regardless of our occasional spurts from our carnal minds, resulting in a triple crash of head-on

collisions, yet all are promptly resolved by painful but healing humility. With a new power to forgive drawn from the heart of the man Christ Jesus, comes the joy of Agape Love. Together we continue our “wonderful” quiet life moving with the many facets of endeavor to refresh our precious bungalow home.

This time of respite from extremely turbulent years is so very appreciated. We spend many hours daily having fellowship with one another and drinking abundantly the ***Water of Life – the Word of God***. As we are rejoicing in praise and thanksgiving at the truth of ***“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive”*** (1 Corinthians 15:22), we are unable to accept “eternal damnation.” We are grieved, but our comfort remains in Jesus!

Scene 5 – Stripping and Restoration

Completely restored, Marie shares with us her new mandate. She must go forth to another area of our Father’s Vineyard, and her departure at the beginning of September. Her sureness, her quiet and congenial attitude overcomes Esther and my surprised reaction. All is effected peacefully.

Simultaneously, Esther receives a call from one son that Daniel has had a heart attack, from which he seems to be recovering, but he must rest for weeks. In true compassion, we agree to offer him our home for recuperation, instead of that lonely basement life. Amazingly, a precious couple from the brethren in British Columbia, announces their visit – driving to Manitoba via Daniel’s dwelling place. This recuperating man arrives with them, having received heartfelt attention. The stage had been set, with no turning back. The scene unfolds before me. The best we know how, we minister Light, Life and Love to this dazed and tired man, who has been raised from his near lethal state.

The next day, Daniel begins to help Esther in the kitchen, both seemingly oblivious of the past. We had five great days of precious

fellowship with our brethren. What I see is phenomenal and this is only a faint beginning of an unfathomable **“Reconciliation.”** It has progressed before me until this day. Their outstanding testimony is theirs to disclose!

As for me, it’s been an ever growing revelation of the **Power of Agape Love** – truly a great treasure of darkness straight from our Father’s heart, not of this world of unforgiveness and bitterness, but from its midst.

Scene 6 - More Dismantlement - Aloneness

Our Divine Stage-Setter works steadily in the valley. Marie is gone...and Esther’s life is definitely transposed to a different “key,” and in the same house, I am now so alone, so very alone. Esther verily spreads herself thin to assist my various needs, while moving in high dedication, facing head-on the consequences of her obedience in this re-marriage.

The curtain rises on a woman alone in my room, within our home. Still plagued with self-pity bouts, I am extremely assaulted by my carnal mind flooding me with lies – believing I am rejected and dejected. Little did I realize that it’s all about my heavenly Father answering my earnest prayer, “to be just like you Jesus – filled with all the fullness of God.” Had I not understood that the cross is a lonely path to be taught, tested and prepared for the glories of resurrection?

My cry unto God remains unanswered for several days. Without any human prop to lean on, I pursue my painful worship in the night season and all the day long. Then came to me His word, **“Come unto me....”** As I truly humble myself before the mighty hand of God, great peace invades me, and I begin to see as in a glass, the glory of the Lord that is freeing me from my anti-Christ, carnal mind. Moreover, I realize our Father’s Love in crucifixion is the process of making saints. Just then, my mind throws a fierce tantrum against God’s sovereignty.

Scene 7 – Come Unto Me...I Will Give You Rest (Matthew 11:28)

Re-echoes, loud and clear, as a loving plea to my aching heart, “My Lucille, who is heavy laden, you struggle and strain – **come unto me, your Lover, and ye shall find rest for your soul.**”

It is since this foundational truth came alive in my spirit, that my heart settled down with a great peace, quietness and assurance forever. Oh! so great salvation!

To be sure, countless are the issues I had with high-mindedness, and what I saw as unfairness, with an endless list of carnal reasoning. Understanding God’s sovereignty began a great transformation in my thinking and self-justification.

Scene 8 – Upward Bound in Kingdom Life.

Oh! the wonders of our God. He is not a “movie” maker, but He is a Professional Mover, who is the same One who moved upon the face of the waters, as in the beginning (*Genesis 1:1*), where God created an incubator designed to produce His offspring. **Our Father is now hastening His Word to perform His final Mighty Act.**

The curtain now rises on another stage-setting of divine production. Time to sit back – Stop, Look and Hear, Lucille. Who are His next features? Amazingly, these come forth, at His command, His own hidden ones in His secret place come forth to share precious revelation knowledge of the Master Plan concerning the **great Day of the Lord, with emphatic proclamation of the fullness of Redemption – the Restoration of all creation – the Jubilee and finally that God may be all in all...at a time when time will be no more....**

Precious Reader, as we are drawing toward the end of reminiscing, let’s rest once more in my delightful-Sanctuary,

and enjoy this refreshment prepared and served with the outstanding heartfelt hospitality of Esther and Daniel.

Even in this peaceful oasis, do we not feel the reverberation coming from the shaking of all nations? We shall not fear, as we are assured that the “Desire of all nations” shall come... and the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former...and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts (Haggai 2:9). ...And He is come and shall make alive all...(paraphrased 1 Corinthians 15:22), that is, every human being ever conceived on this planet under the Adamic curse of sin and death, all immediately rank criminals on death row... and only one Way of escape...A Redeemer!

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,
The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and peace
there shall be no end,
upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom,
to order it, and to establish it with judgment
and with justice from henceforth even for ever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*
(Isaiah 9:6-7)

Scene 9 – Memoir Within Memoirs

Let's pause, and take a peek inside “Four Winds Restaurant” on Mother's Day – a candid event so very dear to my heart.

The place (56 seatings) is packed with vibrant family groups – what joyful day on Prince Edward Island! The filing in of nine joyful children (3-10) walking between the tables to group in a

free corner – causes a hush! With their whole heart, they sing their favorite

**"How sweet to hold a new-born baby,
To feel the pride and joy he brings;
But greater still the calm assurance,
This child shall face uncertain days,
Because He lives!"**

**"Because He lives, I can face tomorrow;
Because He lives, my fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living
Just because my Saviour lives!"**

Then Jonathan, now ten, breaks forth so delightful is his melodious voice – our customers cherish him.

**"Let not your heart be troubled, His tender word I hear;
And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubt and fears.
Tho' by the path He leadeth me, but one step I may see...."**

...and the other eight join in with gusto, yet somewhat lacking harmony, however so refreshing!

"His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He cares for me."

Totally unaware of the impact of their "little ministry" nor the reason of tearful eyes and such an ovation, the younger ones slip away to their playground, the huge sand box, while the five others joyfully greet customers as they return each to their "little" duties.

Scene 10 - Childhood - Dreamland - Reality

Finest white soft feathers are carefully set aside to make

cozy quilts and pillows while the rest of the plumage is bagged for making mattresses – pioneer life! Finally, Maman has her goose meat ready for canning our winter supply. Papa, with his damaged heart, struggles to finish his “fall” work. The yard is now so very desolate. No more group of dazzling white geese noisily marching about somewhat officiously. The occasional sudden flaps of their powerful wings, adds to their innate inclination to be noticed – silly geese, yet so likeable!

In the midst of her rustic kitchen, hour after hour, Mother sits plucking her geese. An example of patience and compassion, she listens to her “petite fille.” Very close to “the plucker,” perched on my own little stool, how I enjoy the frequent assailing white feathers upon me. However, this pleasure fails to meet my ongoing need. “Maman, I’m so lonely and I don’t know why? and Maman, sometimes I’m so scared,” with a sigh, I disclose the weariness of my soul. My dear one, that happens to all of us, it’s life...do you want to play?” is her attempt to offer some relief. “No Maman, playing doesn’t take it away,” the response of a yearning child.

Some 80 years later, while basking in His Magnificence, a panoramic simile unfolds before me a meaningful aspect of my life span – a dream? vision? Darkness everywhere, and as a young maiden I look around me. Faintly apparent are lonely people groping in darkness. My parents and ancestors are all in the mixed up “melée.” Right along with them all, I grab every pleasure I can find. Experiencing fear and loneliness seems to be the only answer for whoever we are???

During a frightening event, in this setting, a Valiant Knight in Shining Armour, riding a swift white Steed, raced beside me with his bare mighty arm swoops me up, to gently clutch his slave to his bosom. My head resting upon his shoulder, my chest pressed hard over his thumping heart, a “flicker” goes through and through me...to find myself in an apparent corral with a group of women fumbling in utter darkness. There for many years I

cherished that “flicker” as the darkness deepened. There in the “dead of night,” from my lonely, fearful and broken heart came a desperate cry to know the man with the “flicker...”

As the vision fades away, appears a glowing ember bursting out into a vehement flame.

**The Memoirs... 90 years....
Being birthed in death**

I endured the endless trials of night....

Behold...an Angel of the Lord cometh unto me!

**Lo, the dawn breaks
While yet the Morning Star, I am aware.**

Behold, my ears now hear

My eyes now see...

I am a New Creation!

...anewsong....

Scene 11 - Two Special Nuggets in My Walk Through Darkness

From the heart of Esther

April 13, 2015

My Aunt Lucille, the author of this book, has asked me to comment on my perception of the years 1983-2010 which we walked in close fellowship. It is a privilege for me to share this excerpt.

1983-1995

In these years, there began an era in our lives unlike before or after. My perception is that it was a time ordained of God as part of our perfecting. Having a zeal for God, but without much knowledge, we longed that people could serve God without all the denominational schisms.

After going to one, and another, and another church and finding again that we are the “ones” mentality, we decided we just wanted to serve God and get to know what Jesus wanted of us.

Early in 1983, my husband asked my Aunt and Grandma to come and live with us and our five children on a dairy farm. Unknown to him or any of us, God was starting a mighty work of extracting religious Babylon from us. God had an elaborate plan which involved many people (*of whom we are very thankful*) to teach us that human (*carnal-minded*) organization will never bring unity. As people saw our zeal to serve God and they also wanted the liberty of the children of God (*especially Lucille who had given her life to serve God totally*), they began to come to the farm for fellowship. Now her whole aim was to do this right once and for all to please God, and now that we were born again, we would do it the way the WORD said it! (*The question remains, “What does the word say?”*)

God provided people for us to **try** to live holy and Godly. He provided children, so that we could practice the principles of discipline, we thought should be. Soon there were too many people to just have coming and going and we too began to do, what we were trying to escape from, **organize**. God did not leave us but walked us through a wilderness, He had prepared to humble us, to prove us and to know what was in our hearts.

Though I see it as we going in the wilderness, it is my personal perception of what God was and is doing in my life, and I realize that not all the people involved would agree. Each individual is in their personal walk with God.

The above years were the years of God's selection (*unknown to us*) of who would journey to Prince Edward Island (*P.E.I.*) to be part of our wilderness journey.

1996-2004

These years saw us living in P.E.I. in a community setting with my Aunt as our leader. We had submitted to this in all sincerity, believing that our submission and obedience would enhance our hearing from God and curb the carnal nature that was such a bondage to us. I set out with much zeal and determination that I would be very obedient to our leader to please God. God would prove to me, that obedience does not produce fellowship with God, but rather fellowship with God produces obedience to His voice – the difference between the old covenant of law externally and the new covenant of the law written in our hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit.

With much experience in trying to obey and getting along with one another, came a great pressure that exposed the depravity of my carnal nature that I had tried so long to hide. But this has proved to be an **invaluable experience** for me, more precious than gold. I began to seek God in great earnest, and I would not be satisfied till I awoke in His likeness. There were many respites in our wilderness journey, when we would have **oases** of the flowing of God's refreshing Spirit. Time after time would be inspiring fellowships with God and my fellow sojourners. Those moments I cherish, and the others have grown dim, now that God has let me understand that all was for our restoration.

These years ended with our dispersion! God used the help of our families, friends, believers, neighbors, the law system, social services, the media, and probably many we are unaware of. At the end, I found myself separated from my husband and my children. I remained with my Aunt and a sister in the Lord, Marie. We moved on to Emerson Manitoba, bewildered but leaning heavily on our beloved's arm.

2005-2010

God appointed Emerson to be our place of respite and healing. In these years, the three of us spent many hours in fellowship with God, each other, and new sojourners we welcomed eagerly.

In 2007, the Lord graciously introduced us to a widespread group of people who instructed us in the gospel of the kingdom and the coming event of the fulfilling of the third feast of **Tabernacles**. We had experienced Passover and Pentecost, but up to this point, we did not even know about moving to Tabernacles. This is where God said, “You have gone around this mountain long enough and it is time you head out of your wilderness.”

Soon after, in 2009 came the further truth that God plans on the Restitution or Restoration of **ALL** things back to **HIMSELF**, that **GOD** may be **ALL in ALL**.

After our cataclysmic events of the previous years, we were ready to let God break down our hard held doctrines of our religious Babylon. What a liberty when the Son sets you free! It was a major milestone and we look ahead to more.

In 2009, my husband and I were remarried. Communication has begun with estranged family, friends and fellow-sojourners. Much healing is required from our zeal without knowledge and the depravity of the carnal mind, but now we know that our Redeemer can well handle it as He continues His transforming in us and the others. My Aunt still lives with us as a precious sister in the Lord and a fellow sojourner.

The end point is that God is Sovereign and He is able and will accomplish what He has planned, namely, The Reconciliation of All things to Himself by Jesus Christ...and His plan continues.

A Heart Message from Marie

Out of my Father's bosom I was born into the earth's wilderness.

I could not have survived without His loving care, holding me, comforting me, guiding me and answering all my prayers!

Out of darkness into this marvelous light.

How great thou art!

Alleluia!

Amen, Amen,

Marie

Scene 12 – Epilogue

Our Wayfaring in “Memoir Lane” and sometimes “Vale” has been over very rugged terrain and now the Stage-Curtain drops, ending my fifty-year walk through great darkness – oh! but that wonderful “flicker” of Love that carried me through it all!

Now our heavenly Father’s Mighty Acts continue to change my life in another setting. In His abundant mercy, He transforms me into a “New Creation” – that is, I passed from “dead in sin” to “everlasting Life,” with the power to become a son of God. My joy is unspeakable and full of glory, as I now and forever have the same divine nature of my Beloved Saviour. Moreover, He fills this “infant” son of God with the Holy Spirit for a source of revelation and power to guide me through cuddling comfort to ruthless destruction, that through life’s successes and failures, He will work steadily until my carnality be destroyed and I rate as an “Overcomer.”

Throughout the next forty years, fiery trials suddenly came upon me, relentlessly destroying what I saw as worthy accomplishments. Today, I am so very appreciative for the divinely “handpicked” people who were involved on Stage with me to bring me to a total failure. Had I not honestly and earnestly prayed, with the assertion to my Father, “Cost what will, I want to be just like Jesus?” Not only was I shaken off my foundation to be established on the Rock of my salvation – but the repercussion of this apparent disaster, is that my Father deals with me mightily.

*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and
knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments
and His ways past finding out!*

(Romans 11:33)

As I understood the absolute Sovereignty of the Captain of our salvation, I received the power to forgive unconditionally, which generates within my being an ongoing flow of Agape Love!

Scene 13 - Ode to Our King

Valiant Knight of hidden armor
Relentless in guarding all humankind.
Despised, rejected of His kinsmen,
Walked about dusty roads
of His native land.
Seeking the down and out, laden
With sin and shame.
Hungry throngs sought Him for
The fish and bread.
Few "brave hearts" drank abundantly
From the living words He said.
Wearing the hidden crown of meekness,
He went about doing good.
Jealous elders spied Him with a wicked eye.
Delivered by His own, for thirty pieces of silver.
Maliciously caught by Roman cohorts,
Who crucified Him and left Him to die.
"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."
Early the third day,
He is risen from the dead.
At His feet is the once - sinful woman.
Appearing to His rare followers, before His ascension
He promises His glorious return.
Behold, He cometh with clouds....
At Golgotha - the place of the skull -
Stands the blood-stained Cross - the empty Tomb
Mankind is acquitted - The debt is paid!
Yet fearfulness and unbelief remains
The sinners' greatest plague.
Now reverberating throughout
This shaken universe,
This is His word from the Realm of Glory,
"Behold! I come quickly
And my reward is with me
To give every man according
As his works shall be.

**I am Alpha and Omega
The beginning and the end
The first and the last.
I am the root and offspring of David
And the bright and Morning Star.
Surely! I come quickly."**
(Inspiration taken from Isaiah 53, Revelation 22)

*Great and marvelous are thy works
Lord God Almighty,
Just and true are thy ways,
Thou, King of saints
Who shall not fear thee, O Lord,
And glorify thy name? for thou only art holy;
For all nations shall come and worship before Thee,
For thy judgements are made manifest.
(Revelation 15:3-4)*

Scene 14 - Realm of Glory

In thee, O Lord do I put my trust...
By thee have I been holden up from the womb:
Thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels:
My praise shall be continually of thee.
I am a wonder unto many;
But thou art my strong refuge.
Let my mouth be filled with thy praise,
And with thine honor all the day...
I will go in the strength of the Lord God;
I will make mention of thy righteousness
Even of thine only.
O God thou hast taught me from my youth
And hitherto I have declared thy wondrous works.
Now also when I am old and grey headed,
O God forsake me not;
Until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation,
And thy power to everyone that is to come...
O God, who is like unto thee!

from Psalm 71

*Jesus saith unto her (Martha),
"Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe
thou shouldest see the glory of God!"*

(John 11:40)

My story of God's mighty acts, I release to proclaim His manifold wisdom according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- carried me through my journey through darkness.
- brought me forth into His marvelous Light.
- freed me from sin and death to partake of His Life.
- empowered me with unconditional forgiveness.
- teaching me to unlock and heal broken hearts by Divine Love.
- calls me to sonship – which I cherish at all cost!
- prepares me to judge the angels and understand His Sovereignty
- begotten to obtain the character of the Lamb – to be like Him!
- to attain the resurrection of the dead
- I am assured a destination into our heavenly Father's exceeding magnificent glorious "Hall of Fame" from where the Lord and His Christ shall deliver the whole creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The Year of Jubilee is at hand!

Hence I consider my long life as a dream of yesterday and surely a short prelude to the infinite magnitude of glory prepared for all who love Him.

Together, each according to our calling, bold as a lion and meek as the Lamb that was slain, and by His resurrection power we will endure as we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God (*Acts 14:22*) – so great an Eternal Wealth – the Crown of Life.

Precious Co-Wayfarer – fare well! Be of good cheer, God shall be all in all!