

July 12, 1963

Hi! This is a rather difficult assignment, dear one. Write an article for others on how a CP feels about "things?" If you weren't such a great relative of mine I might chicken out. But as things stand, I love ya loads and owe you lots, so...

There are O so many things we could tell our friends. Lots of times I say thank you till it begins to sound rather artificial from familiarity. O if you only knew what that thank you really means! Like during our recent visit. To come to your lovely home, to be there not so much as a "guest" or the other extreme, a piece of "cumbersome" furniture, but simply one with you, that was quite a privilege. Of course, you know how I felt about it. Feelings are rather hard to control, and it's no wonder I'm tied to this little buggy. Otherwise I might be tring to vum a way home from the moon.

Of course the popular commercial of the day must be selling lots of "charity Pills," and to tell the truth I need a couple myself now and then as I suppress a tremendous desire to scream "I'd RATHER DO IT MYSELF." After I've been with others a little while they learn the many, many little things unruly hands, and feet, can perform quite well. I'm sure it's much easier to get it done quickly and easily with your own efficiency than to sit and watch us fumble. So...just don't sit and watch us! Simpler for everyone that way. Right?

It's such fun for me to be on the floor. Maybe because there's less gravity to fight. Think so? Anyhow, most people, in learning that I'm going to take the plunge, run for blankets and pillows and just anything their desperation can think of. And because of the gubbub all the fun disappears for me. Instead I get the feeling of being a bother, disturbing an otherwise enjoyable time by such superfluous attentions. Then you soon learn that I'm not the champion diver my brother is, and I have to laugh to see your faces as I flop at your feet. Laughter, such beautiful music. And then you join-me, beautiful harmony. We must fill each others' life with that happy sound. O truly it's worth living.

Surely your super hamburgers have been praised by every word appropriate. But did you realize the special something I liked about them? They're so easy to handle, my favorite meal. Our desserts in nice deep bowls, straws with our drinks, liquids often throughout the day, repeated reminders that I needn't hurry. O such thoughtfulness! Letting me wash up at the side fo the tub, permitting me to leave my towels and washcloths there so conveniently near, even your compliment on my daily appearance and care and dress. These are rather inflating to one's ego, to say the least. They sound good now and then. The woman in us is certainly not missing. But rather, I think that each time our body cannot perform a woman's function our heart must expand to meet the challenge.

I love to BE with people, that's all. No handicappers last five minutes in the crowd. Our wiggles are irrelevant; our opinions weighed. We are one with you, and we are happy. It's important to maintain a gay openness. Just to let others know what we can and cannot do, then we reach an understanding that gives us time for fun, a relaxing atmosphere we so appreciate. You made me feel so good there at your home. You didn't fret about constantly entertaining me but left me to my own fancies much of the time. With you I felt like just ME, and we chatted and giggled and LIVED together those few days. T

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Thogh there is such a debt of gratitude in my heart I can't help feeling God let me give YOU something too. That's life, and I love it!

### A RIGHT TO BE MARY

Jesus was visiting His dear friends one day. Martha was fixing His dinner, but Mary sat at His feet. What beautiful love stories He had to tell her. She had no desire but to be there at His feet, to learn of Him Who is meek and humble of heart. But Martha grew quite irritated, and Jesus gently rebuked her. "Martha, Martha, you are anxious about many things; yet only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the better part, and it shall not be taken from her."

Today Jesus remains with us; in our chapels; in the presence of those gathered in His name; and in the poverty of our hearts. And there are some Marys' always at His feet, grieving that their sisters know not what it's like to be there. In their uselessness they learn the joyous truth that nothing is impossible to God. They are still called lazy by those who know not Jesus' message. But it matters little what others say; Jesus knows, and it is for Him and only Him they live. He goes to the cloister as He once went to the home of His friends to dine. He loves to be with His friends.

But I am in no cloister; and only God knows the gulf between me and a contemplative. Yet this right to be Mary shan't be taken from me. Not I, but our heavenly Father has chosen this better part for me. He takes from me the dishes and the laundry and the scrubbing and gives me HIMSELF. "More than Himself He could not give; less than Himself He would not give."

Sometimes it's hard to appreciate the vocation of BEING. Our entire education has been geared from it. We're taught what to DO, we're praised for DOING, and soone we begin to measure our worth by what we've DONE. Yet only one thing is necessary, to belong to Jesus, to know that He love US. And all else shall be added.

Not long ago I wrote a bit of what the handicapper in me felt. But that paper is so shallow and incomplete. For who among us is not a "handicapper" somehow? Yet the more we live the life of Christ the more we are made whold. Apart from Him I am worse than nothing. I am misery and sinfulness; but He is the Love of my heart. His Spirit give life to my flesh and joy to my soul. "He must increase;" my own selfishness must be annihilated. All my life I may shout the good news of great joy to all. For the Word of God is mine, and yours. We are all syllables in the angels' song. God forbid that I forget to sing!

There was once a little Maiden named Mary who pleased God above all His creatures. And she humbly consented to bring Him to this lovely earth which He'd made. "She who was lowest in her own eyes saw without tremor that she was highest in God's eyes; and she was glad because He was glad and for no other reason." O how I long to please Him thus. yet I see this Mother, so silent and graceful, the depth of Womanhood, and I shrink back in shame. But just for a second. For what can cerebral palsy do to a woman's heart? It's easy to tell God what great gifts I would like to give Him, yet it's heroic to give the wee things He asks.. His little one I must remain, completely abandoned to His Holy Will, my only happiness. Like a baby whose Father lovingly tosses her into the air. And she laughs in her delight, for she has the wonderful confidence that His strong arms will catch her.

We don't find our Mother Mary preaching sermons on the mount, healing the sick, raising the dead. We find her jostled in the crowds that followed her Jesus, sometimes too far behind to see His face or hear His words. Yet He knew she was there. That was enough. A woman wrapped in silence, giving her all that Jesus might reign in all hearts. And mine is the right to be Mary.

"A saint preaches sermons by the way he walks and the way he talks and the way he picks things up and holds them in his hands." Merton tells us. But who is there to comprehend the things we hold within our hearts. There LOVE reigns.

A LITTLE ONE

MARLY IN LOVE

August 17, 1963