



Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

Peace to you dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Don't you just love it when you go paging through your favorite Bible and find the scripture that God has laid on your mind, all circled or underlined, better yet yellow-highlighted?

So it is, my scripture for today, that one-sentence, no punctuation at all, outcry—for which for this retired English teacher girds her weary loins this early morning. The warmth, sheer conviction, and gentle, but oh so strong hug, is one that I needed today. It becomes our battle cry of conviction, an uplifting exhortation to be sure, and a believer's "shout-out" that is even more powerful this pre-dawn morning for me and why I chose it.

Because this late-spring, soon to be Summer, *Hug-in-A-Mug* may go down as perhaps the shortest, briefest HUG in these ten years now. You see, I am packing the car and attending tomorrow the Memorial Service of my very, very best friend of my life. She was my first college roommate, that early September "day one," the first day we all stepped out from under our father's roof for the very first time, to somewhere, whatever those circumstances be. We were the teachers' college Freshmen Class at Monmouth's OCE! Which for us, blossomed into a firm and fast "Forever Friends" of sixty-four years. We remained steadfast, raising our five children together, to become our second generation of "Forever" How priceless is that? And only death breaks that "tie that binds." You, of my Christian Family, know that loss comes with needed time to weep, remember, cherish, and reflect. For these acts, and her largesse in Oregon, with great accomplishments in her nearly 82 years, my trip will bring a gathering of likely hundreds.

I seek refuge every dawn in my *Portals of Prayer* to start these slow-moving days of late, finding comfort over my strong Mug of Norwegian black coffee—And curiously this day is titled "*The Peace of Christ*," and focuses on what any degree of alone and isolation can bring to those who do not have a tight-knit community, that brotherhood of fellow Christians, to whom I cling. I am so blessed daily by phone calls, condolences of late from my sisterhood and their power of prayer, lunching together after Sunday services, so I don't go home to that empty house—I am bound by OUR faith alone. AND I do so anticipate seeing a host of you this upcoming June at our LWML Oregon District Convention—with our Ingathering.

I have been blessed so many times each and every day this past wearisome month of how God already has ordered my steps (Psalm 104:24-35) as I follow Him. *Praise the Lord, O my soul.*

May our loving Lord Direct your footsteps according to His word!!!

Respectfully Yours... ☺ Pat Reck, HUG Author