



In All Things Charity

By Dan Almeter



There is a famous phrase often attributed to St. Augustine that goes like this: "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity." Because we choose in our community to focus on the essentials of the Christian faith, we are able to move forward in unity without stumbling over the differences we still have among ourselves. But it is charity (love) that has enabled us to not make our differences the focus. It is always a temptation to get our focus on the 5% or 10% that we can't agree on. It is charity that enables us to live life together with such unity. This unity is beautiful to behold. We don't deny our differences or say they aren't important. But we do say, and have made a covenant with God and one another that says, "Love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ."

Again, I repeat, it is this love that makes our unity possible. By love I don't mean a gooshy feeling or sentimental feeling of affection (though affection is good). By love I mean the kind of Gospel caring for one another

er that Jesus talks about — the kind where you crucify your flesh, your attitudes, your tongue, your heart, and die to yourself. Alleluia Catholics and Protestant/Evangelicals and even a Messianic Jewish couple, have agreed to hold this kind of love for one another for the rest of our lives.

Having this depth of covenant love that holds us together as true brothers and sisters in Christ comes at a cost. For each of us, the cost is different. But let me attempt to paint a couple of areas where we have worked hard and need to continue working hard, to have the kind of love Jesus desires among us.

I'll start with the Catholics. This isn't true of all Catholics so I risk over-generalizing. But basically, because they represent at least 80% of the Community, they can often lose sight of the minority of Protestant/Evangelicals among us. Catholics can talk about the church as though they mean only the Roman Catholic Church (thus excluding the rest of our brothers and sisters who are not Roman Catholic). They can also hold a

smug attitude of being "truth holders" that leads to an attitude of superiority. Even though Catholic doctrine teaches that the "fullness of truth resides in the Catholic Church," they can forget that there are elements of the truth that our Protestant/Evangelical brothers and sisters live out in greater fullness and truth than many of the Catholics.

When Bob and I were in Rome this past May, the Catholic head of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity (Msgr. Juan Usma Gomez) said this representing the Catholic Church, "We cannot be truly Catholic, and our Catholicism is not complete, without the brothers and sisters that we are not in full communion with... we are learning and receiving graces from what others are giving us." In Alleluia, the Catholics are learning that they cannot be fully Catholic without the help and gifts of our Protestant/Evangelical brothers and sisters. This is radical talk coming from the Vatican but so very true!

(Continued on page 4 - CHARITY)

A Small Name But a Large Heart

By Jim Dooley

Where do you start? How do you capture the essence or spirit of Jenny in just a few words. When reflecting on this, words like faithfulness, holiness, righteousness come to mind. I recalled some of the sharings at her wake where the same words were used by those who knew Jenny well when they shared about her life.

These thoughts called to mind the words of a song we do on occasion. Most of us are familiar with it. "Faithfulness. Faithfulness is what I long for. Faithfulness is what I need...." This is repeated with holiness and righteousness. These qualities describe Jenny. The refrain says, "Take my heart and form it; take my mind, transform it; take my will, conform it to Yours, to Yours, O Lord." Jenny strove to do this daily.

If you want to know Jenny and how her walk with the Lord grew, read her testimony in our Community book *By the Word of Their Testimonies*. If you don't have one, get one or borrow one.

Jenny came from a very difficult childhood. However, the one thing she clung too was her faith. She grew up, she married Don and began to raise a family facing the daily challenges we all face. At times, this was very hard. You can get overwhelmed with diapers, formula, homework and the next thing you realize, you're not attending church services regularly. However she never let go of her faith. She and Don grew in their relationship and in their relationship with the Lord. Fast forward.... They moved to Alleluia Community, and Jenny was finally able to experience, as she shares in her testimony, the love of unconditional relationships.

I knew Jenny through our being

on the Intercessory Prayer Team together. I talked with her weekly, lots of times more than once a week. She was a great prayer warrior. She had a heart to pray for people and situations. I never knew Jenny when she was not in pain. She suffered every day of her life and as the years moved on, the pain increased. I'd call her about an intercessory request and she would ask me to keep her in my prayers. On more than one occasion, she would come into the office and ask for prayers. She would apologize for bothering us, but the pain was so intense that she knew only prayer would help. She was always faithful to praying for the intercessory request that went out daily. Occasionally, there are times prayer requests are called out to individual members of the team. They may be too confidential to leave on an answering machine. On these occasions, I could always count on Jenny saying "yes" and be confident she would faithfully pray and the need would remain confidential.

In 2013, when she and Don were preparing to take their long awaited "odyssey" out West and points beyond, she called me. She asked if she could take a leave from the intercessory team while they were gone as she was not sure where they might be, maybe no cell service, etc. I told her sure, we would get plugged back in upon their return to Augusta. They hadn't been gone too long when I got a call from her one day. She told me that the Lord told her that she could enjoy the trip and still have time to pray. That's how important the work was to her.

Jenny loved the Lord and loved her Don, or as she would say more



Jenny Small

than once "that man". We were having a conversation one day and the subject of Don came up. She told me that "you could get Don in his RV, you could get him in his big truck, you could get him in his plane – but you were not going to get him in a tie! But boy do I love that man."

This is the Jenny I knew. She had a gift of prayer and she looked for ways she could serve. She was the person who bought a pair of new boots for a new worker because the concrete was eating up his sneakers. She was the person who would bring lunch to her Don at the job site and bring extra for the crew.

You may be a new member of Alleluia and find it hard to place a face with the name. In recent years, her health limited the activities she could attend. You may only know that she was the wife of Mr. "Good Morning." She was much more than that. She was the reason for the "Good" in Good morning. She was the person constantly praying. Jenny may have been under the radar, but now she is flying above the clouds. I'm confident she is experiencing unconditional, loving relationships.

Her name might have been Small, but she had a very LARGE heart.

Planting Mustard Seeds of Faith

By Natalie Salazar

A great time was had by ALL at Vacation Bible School! Alleluia partnered again this year with Burns Memorial United Methodist Church under the direction of Allison Rae putting together a successful week of learning about God's Word for over 100 children.

Our teachings centered on the story of Esther, rebuilding the Lord's House, parable of the mustard seed, feeding the 5,000 and walking to Emmaus. Our children were encouraged to IMAGINE, BUILD, GROW, WORK and WALK with God.

Janet Hatfield and Richard Valiquette opened and closed each day as Sandy Paper and Rivet the Ant. The

children attended games led by Megan Smolley, snacks prepared by Anita Funsch, science experiments arranged by Linda Weddle, Bible Story performed by Cathy McAdams, crafts directed by Tina Bovier, and worship music led by Carolyn King.

Many thanks to them and to all of our group leaders for sharing their time and talents! One of our vision verses was "how beautiful are the feet of those who announce the good news" (Romans 10:15). Indeed, how beautiful are those feet that walked in each day to serve. May God water the seeds planted in each heart this week!



Rivet the Ant



WORK

WALK with God



Sandy Paper

B
U
I
L
D



G
R
O
W



Planting Mustard Seeds

(Continued from page 3 - VBS)



I
M
A
G
I
N
E



Charity

(Continued from page 1 - CHARITY)

It is our love for one another that has helped bring us to this realization. Catholics must continue to fight any temptation to believe or speak or act otherwise.

On the Protestant/Evangelical side, it has to be covenant love that enables us to resist the temptation to look down on the Catholic brothers and sisters as "less biblical" and thus, less authentically Christian. Because Evangelical/Protestants represent only 20% or less of the Community, perhaps the greatest temptation is to "take offense." It is very easy for the majority to forget that there is a minority present.

It takes heroic love at times, for the Protestant/Evangelical brothers and sisters to not become resentful, or take personal offense by casual comments that turn them into second-class Community members. To refuse taking offense is to live the Gospel.

As Alleluia continues to move for-

ward in the area of unity, let us remember always, "In all things charity." Like a young couple that fall in love and get married, it is very hard work to stay in love after many years of struggles, children, job difficulties, in-laws and personality quirks. In Alleluia we need to continue to "love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ." Our charity must become and remain heroic.

I'd like to close this Dove article with a story that sums up some of what I've been trying to convey. In 2001, Marie and I were attending a meeting of the Catholic Fraternity in Phoenix. The guest speaker was Cardinal Rylko (then Bishop Rylko), President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. During lunch one day, he sat right down next to Marie. Trying to make conversation with him and being quite nervous, Marie pulled out photos of the children and started showing them off. To Marie's surprise, the Bishop switched the subject and asked her how it worked for her to be a Catholic in an ecumenical community. Marie will tell you she is

no theologian, but quite spontaneously and inspired by the Holy Spirit, she replied, "Well, it's too late now Bishop. We're in love with all the Protestants in our community so we just work it out." And the miracle is that we have learned how (and need to keep working at) loving one another without compromising what we hold essential to our faith traditions.

Dan Almeter is an Elder of the Alleluia Community, responsible for teaching and formation programs. He is a licensed marriage and family counselor and has recently retired from the Georgia Department of Social Services where he was responsible for adoptions. He has been a Full Covenant member of Alleluia since 1978. He and his wife Marie have six children and six grandchildren and live in Augusta, Georgia, where they attend St. Joseph Catholic Church.

© 2014 Alleluia Community, adm. by Alleluia Christian Service Center, Inc. P.O. Box 6805, Augusta, GA 30916-6805, (706) 798-1882. All rights reserved.