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Spiritual Messages on Social Media

by Marie Almeter



Facebook, Twitter, blogs, Instagram, Snapchat, these are all ways we connect with each other in a somewhat hurried world.

But what if we could also be a source of light on these sites in a world growing darker by the minute? What if we used these to share wisdom and encouragement daily?

I have several of these sites on my news feed that I look to like a person parched and dying of thirst. They always bring me the encouragement that I'm going to make it; I'm going to be OK. If we who love Jesus need this, how much more does secular society?

I wonder how Jesus would handle all forms of social media if they were accessible during His time and He were able to post spiritual messages. I believe He would say:

- Only what is kind
- Only what is honoring
- Only what is patient
- Only what is truthful
- Only what is trustful
- Only what is hopeful

- Nothing dishonoring
- Nothing self-seeking
- Nothing boastful
- Nothing angry

If Jesus is truly whom we strive to imitate in every way, we need to really look at what we are posting to see if it measures up to scripture, (1 Cor. 13)

One Facebook feed I really like is Joyce Meyer's "Everyday Living". It is always encouraging and full of hope, as is Anne Voskamp's page. I also like Franklin Graham's page. Another really good one is Fr. Robert Barron's "Word on Fire".

I am encouraged and informed by sources I can trust about issues around the world and at home, especially concerning the persecution of Christians.

Ecumenically, we need to be sensitive when posting. My family is Protestant and I am Catholic. My family is on my Facebook feed, I am not going to share anything that is part of their history or tradition in a way that would offend them. I am not going to bring up our

differences. When we do that, we are using social media to destroy, rather than to build up. I concentrate on what we have that binds us together.

Facebook is a great way to ask for prayers and get a lot of folks pounding heaven when we need it. When I ask for prayer on Facebook, I try to ask in a way that does not reflect negatively on any person or situation. We need to post spiritual needs and prayer requests in a way that no individual or situation is dishonored.

Larry Burkett, famous Christian economist, used to say "Show me your bank statement or your checkbook and I will show you where your heart is." How do our postings describe the kind of heart we have and present to our family, friends, and community?

Marie Almeter is a Registered Nurse, wife of an Elder of the Alleluia Community, and an Alleluia Handmaid (one of twenty women providing overall insight to the Elders from a womanly perspective). Marie has been a Full Covenant member of Alleluia since 1975. She and her husband Dan have six children and ten grandchildren and attend St. Joseph Catholic Church in Augusta, Georgia.

Time To Get Dressed

by Jim Murphy



Reproduced with the permission of the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the United States, Inc., PentecostToday, Volume 40, Number 3, Summer 2015, pp 8, 9 and 12, Jim Murphy, "Time to Get Dressed".

I was in a car yesterday, driving through Rome with a group of friends. My assignment was to check out places to hold a future event in the city. As we drove along, we passed by so many places that had such dear memories for me: St Peter's Basilica where we met with Pope Paul VI at Pentecost 1975, the fields above the catacombs of St. Callistus where we gathered to praise God and celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which at times would break out into spontaneous dancing!

I saw places where men and women from around the world had gathered, speaking different languages but united in the language of the Spirit. Oh the joy, the fire...and the fun!

My thoughts were brought back to the present moment when an Argentinian woman (a personal friend of Pope Francis) asked me a question as we drove along. "In June, it will be a year since the Holy Father addressed the worldwide Renewal here in Rome. At that time he told us he wanted us to bring this experience of the Holy Spirit to all of the Church. I haven't seen much action in the Renewal on this point. Jim, if the Holy Father should ask me how we are doing what shall I tell him?" "Tell him we got tired," I mumbled under my breath. The conversation in the car stopped and everyone looked at me. "Some folks have been trying to do that very thing for the last 50 years," I

continued, "and have not always been welcomed with open arms. I think some people have just worn down." The Argentine nodded in silent agreement but came back with a dramatic statement "But now there is a new opportunity, a new possibility! We have to wake the Renewal up! This is the time!" Another added in, "We have carried this baby or so long, we cannot be too tired to deliver the child!" Another analogy was offered; "It is as if we got dressed to go to a party and we waited and waited for the invitation. We got tired of waiting so we took off our party clothes and put on our pajamas. Now the party is about to begin...and we are in our pajamas!"

We were driving by St Peter's at the moment and my thoughts turned to a particular place in the square where once I had seen an ailing Pope John Paul II struggle out of his chair to declare with all the strength he could muster, "Be open to the Holy Spirit! Be open to the Holy Spirit!" Those words, spoken many years earlier, seemed to me to be a prophetic exhortation from the now-canonized Pontiff.

Are we truly "open to the Holy Spirit?" Are we indeed at a moment of "new opportunity, new possibility?" Are we "dressed for the party" or "home in our pajamas?"

The conversation in the car returned to normal, but I sat there in silence, looking out the window and reflecting on the last 5 minutes....and the

last 50 years.

I will acknowledge that time has moved on and we cannot return to 1967. Nor can we discern the future through a nostalgic look at the past.

We can learn from the past, however, and see what we can embrace in the current moment and go forward.

I know I am speaking in broad generalities, but here are some things we did that kept the fire burning bright:

We were people committed to prayer. Our lives were restructured to ensure that we had a significant amount of time for personal prayer. It became one of the highest priorities of life...higher than sleep or showers or food. It was a common thing to ask a friend "So...how is your prayer time going these days?" Our prayer was contemplative, it was charismatic, it was traditional...and it was consistent. Every follower of Jesus saw it as their personal responsibility to have a daily prayer time.

We devoured Scripture. When touched by the Holy Spirit, we became infatuated with the Word of God. We would always carry our Bibles with us. A Scripture passage could become the focus of a lunch time conversation. We would constantly turn to Scripture for strength, guidance and inspiration. It was unthinkable to go to bed at night if you had not read your Bible for whatever amount of time you were committed.

After encountering the Holy Spirit,

we had such a new sensitivity to the Sacraments! We were amazed that ancient rituals which we had grown up with now seemed so vital and alive. Every time we went to Mass, every time we entered the confessional, we expected to encounter the living Christ who had become so real, so relevant in our lives.

The Spirit of God also opened our hearts to others. We hungered for fellowship. We met with brothers and sisters of other denominations and saw them as co-workers in the Vineyard. Our own fellow Catholics became deepest friends. God put a new love in our hearts for family and co-workers. It was a sovereign work of God, and we knew it. We never complained about a prayer meeting going too long. Heck, we would stay up all night if need be...it was just so much fun to be together!

We did not "throw a switch" after a prayer meeting. We sought to follow the Spirit 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We would use the charisms at a conference, but also in the workplace. God "might show up anywhere" and we always wanted to be ready to follow his lead.

I think that even though we saw ourselves as "part of the Renewal," our true identity was that we had been grasped by Christ. Our identity was directly linked to him. There was not much talk about my ministry or

one person's accomplishments. The focus was on God, not the person.

And it was about the Lord that we spoke so freely. We could not be quiet! We would tell anybody...and everybody that "We have seen the Lord!" Sometimes we were met with skepticism and even mocking...but we would not be silent. What had been whispered to us in our hearts was shouted from the rooftops!

There was a sense that we were all in this together. True, the Renewal had leaders, but it had no spectators. Everyone did their part. Everyone took personal responsibility, doing their share to keep the fires of Pentecost burning bright.

The driver of the car slammed on the brakes to avoid hitting a motorcycle, jarring me out of my reverie. I tried to re-enter the conversation but could not. I was asking myself a few questions:

What is my daily prayer life like? How committed am I each day to Scripture? Do I have an expectation of encountering the living Lord in the sacraments...or am I just going through the motions? Am I still in fellowship, on a regular basis with "people of the fire?" Am I "charismatic" only when it is convenient or am I always ready to respond to the promptings of the Spirit? Who have I spoken with recently about my encounter with Christ? Do I see myself as belonging

to a religious club...or to Christ? Is my involvement in Charismatic Renewal more about what God is doing...or what I am doing? Am I taking some responsibility for fanning the flame in my own life, or waiting for others to carry me along? Can I just relax, have a little more fun and trust in God or do I need to "make everything work?" Where is the fire? Where is the joy? Where is my "first love?"

I hadn't noticed that the car was parked and everyone had gotten out. We were going to the Church of the Holy Spirit, very close to St Peter's. I hurriedly walked in with a new enthusiasm. This is a new moment, a new opportunity! The best days lie ahead. We only need to be faithful to God on a daily basis and wait for him to act. The Spirit is about to move in a new way. It won't be a repeat of 50 years ago. It will be the work of the Spirit for this time! It will be wonderful! I am going to reinvest my life in those little things we committed to so long ago. I am going to put the pajamas away for at least another 50 years. I'm getting dressed for the party!

Jim Murphy is the Director of Leadership Formation Initiatives for International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services. He also serves as the Country Coordinator of Mexico Missions for Renewal Ministry. Jim is President of Vera Cruz Communications.

To My Young People:

My Young people, some of you are here because your parents brought you here. Some of you are not sure why you are here, but your hearts are open to me. Many of you are here because you genuinely want to know, love and serve me. I delight in ALL of you being here, no matter the condition of your heart. Your being here is no accident! When I formed you in the womb, I knew that you would be here tonight. I AM calling each of you to open your hearts to ME - OPEN THEM WIDE – Let Me fill them with my love, my compassion, my wisdom and

my grace. I need you to be STRONG – I need you to be JOYFUL – I need you to be HOLY! For when you are strong and joyful and holy you will be able to draw other young people to me. YOU ARE NOT HERE BY ACCIDENT – The Father is calling – I, Jesus your Savior am knocking at the door of your heart - The Holy Spirit wants to fill each of your hearts and make you strong, and joyful and holy. Open wide your hearts – Open wide your hearts - Open wide your hearts!



Meet the Andrews

By Anna Dresser

In response to many members who do not recognize some of our Underway members, we are continuing a series of articles to introduce them to the Greater Alleluia Community.

The next couple, who were introduced to the Community a little over a year ago, is Chester and Nancy Andrews. They went underway soon after coming to Alleluia in June, 2014. They currently attend St. Joseph Catholic Church and are affiliated with the Samaha Support Group.

Nancy, who is a Nurse Practitioner and teacher, works at Georgia Regents University College of Nursing. Chester is a businessman. They grew up around Boston, lived in California, and spent most of their married life in Connecticut. Chester and Nancy have two adult children: Meredith, who lives in Connecticut, and Nicholas, who lives in Seattle.

Before coming to Community, they were part of a local charismatic Catholic group, but that fizzled out after a



Nancy and Chester Andrews

while. "We felt like we were on our own," Nancy said. It was not much longer afterwards that she saw an Alleluia bumper sticker and was introduced to the idea of the Alleluia Community through Monique Seith and Nicole Chapa Lawson – a couple of friends of hers.

When the Andrews had the chance to visit Community, they began to really envision their family there. One of the biggest surprises Nancy had concerning Alleluia was how much she had in common with members.

She feels like she fits in very nicely here. "I am also impressed the most by the kids," Nancy said. "They're very good kids. I hope they realize how blessed they are to be here." The Andrews appreciate the personal support that comes from our Alleluia life as well. "I think that Community allows you to be the best version of yourself," Nancy said.

Not only are the Andrews enjoying Community life but also just life in the south.

ACSC Office Welcomes Becky Visintainer

By Alice Alger



There's a new face at the Alleluia office. Of course, she is really very familiar, since she and her husband, John, have been Full Covenant members for 17 years. But as Trish Sanford leaves us to start teaching full-time, we are delighted to have Becky join us as the Elders' secretary and sometimes front desk receptionist. Recently, she served as part-time secretary for St. Joseph Catholic Church, but when Larry offered her a full-time position, she was delighted to accept.

Becky was born in Augusta, GA and met John while working at LensCrafters in the Mall. He did not buy the glasses, but asked her out instead. She decided to go Underway while dating John and lived in the Krepps' household. They have three children Matthew, 12, Robby, 16, and Rachel, 17, and live in Faith Village on Ruby Drive.

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