



## How Fast Can You Forgive?

The main thrust of the two books we are reading for the community retreat deal with forgiveness. We have written two great articles on this subject previously that bear our review at this time. These articles will precede the retreat that starts on September 22 and ends on the 24th. Please pray for the success of the retreat and that the Holy Spirit fills our retreat with His power and love.



By Pamela Nestor

Who knew that a bemused wink at my girlfriend would bring this on? The teacher, who had made an error in what she taught, called me to her desk with all my books, said a few angry words, and flung them over the heads of all my classmates, telling me to leave everything on the floor till the end of the day. Ah, memories of my boarding school in England. I was okay with that humiliation. I didn't waste any energy on her by being angry, but my judgment and disdain for her didn't help either! Her behavior towards me only got worse. I wonder how life those two years might have changed if I had understood the blessings of having a forgiving heart.

I lived in over a dozen places, so I learned to "excuse" people for relationship challenges due to different cultures, different upbringings and just plain misunderstandings. If I couldn't dismiss a "hurt," I just waited a few months until we'd move away. No forgiveness needed – prob-

ably none really given.

Years passed, and I married and started a family. We heard the Lord call us to community. My skid marks to signing Covenant boiled down to this: I could no longer escape uncomfortable relationships.

That was 40 years ago. Since then, with God's immense grace while living the wonderful life of Alleluia and a growing family, I made an amazing discovery: God was not going to allow me to escape any more! (Did I mention being helped by five children and a mother and mother-in-law?)

In fact, the Lord re-visited me with virtually EVERY level of opportunity to learn how to forgive His way. I learned and experienced Matthew 18:15 forgiving and asking forgiveness face-to-face. I began to practice asking forgiveness. The Lord walked me through many memories where I could offer forgiveness to family, friends and "not-friends." I gained enormous freedom. My joy increased.

Soon after Bob's Mom moved in with us, she told me that, although I never argued with anything she said, she could see the fire in my eyes. I know she didn't mean a Holy Spirit glow! Years later, that fire was replaced by my God-given acceptance and love – I had learned to forgive on the spot – really, really fast.

Incredibly, forgiveness became not just a way of life but a true adventure. When prayerlessness or lethargy set in, I searched for hidden sins to repent of, and for suppressed anger and disappointments in people I could forgive. I discovered many surprises along the way. As the Holy Spirit showed me events, I had "aha" moments: "Yes, I really was affected by that. I need to forgive them." These were rarely of Matt. 18:15 gravity. They were caused by that person's own distinct personality, upbringing, inner woundedness, misperceptions

## *Work Hard at Never Taking Offense*

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or thoughtless comments. (Did I say Freudian slips?) The more I intentionally forgave (out loud when possible, always in the Name of Jesus or the Blood of Jesus), the better I recognized ways I might be offending others.

I know now that life is so much lovelier if I keep up with forgivenesses. I work very hard never to "take offense." If I will simply forgive and ask Jesus to bless them, I can move forward in grace and holiness. Otherwise, I get a knot in my "gut," a pressure in my head, and probably a

bump in my blood pressure as well. If I do have to go to a sister and clarify an uncomfortable situation, I make sure I have prayed well in advance and let the Holy Spirit show me anything I need to repent of, and I forgive her for any offenses I have "taken," so there won't be a "barb" in my conversation with her.

My journey continues. I have lots of forgiving to give and receive ahead of me. My goal is to forgive and bless as fast as I can, so I can grow into more freedom and joy. Raise your

hand if you've ever heard me say: Forgive! Forgive! Forgive!

**Pamela Nestor** is an Elder's wife and an Alleluia Handmaid, one of twenty women who provide overall insight to the Community Elders from a womanly perspective. Pam has been serving in pastoral care for about 30 years. She also serves on the Provident and Resourceful Team. She and her husband, Bob, have been members of Alleluia since 1976. They have five children, eleven grandchildren and live in Augusta, Georgia, where they are members of St. Joseph Catholic Church.

## *Tolerance is a Form of Forgiveness*

By Andy Beaudoin

When I think of forgiveness the first thing that comes to mind is Jesus' words just before his death on the cross, "Forgive them, Father; they know not what they do." Since Jesus is to be our model, this is quite some challenge. The second thing that comes to mind is the admonition, "You will be forgiven as you forgive." I have a lot to be forgiven for. I need to take that to heart. Then there are the words of our Covenant, "...to be quick to forgive and ask forgiveness...." These words I believe are the glue that holds the Community together. My natural tendency when I am hurt or offended is to avoid that brother or sister. But if we follow that tendency, we would not have community.

My first impulse was to think back over my life for the big things I had to forgive or seek forgiveness for. But there are so many more little things. I feel led to write on forgiveness in these little things of life. If we can forgive the little things, we will be better prepared for the larger

things when they come.

Carol and I were married when she was nineteen and I was twenty-two. She was brought up in a household with a domineering mother. She was shy and not very self-confident. I'm sure it was under the leading of the Holy Spirit that I was led to uplift her. I tried to be positive and compliment her whenever I could and tell her how much I loved her. It took about ten years, but she developed into the strongest, most self-assured and confident woman I have ever known. I don't want to take credit for what God did, but He did use me in molding her.

Now, I could have emphasized the negative, and I did more often than I should. I have found that most of what we see as negatives or irritants are just differences. We do things in different ways. And, of course, my way is better. As a man, my tendency is to fix it. But if you love someone for who they are, why not let them be who they are? I believe tolerance is a



form of forgiveness. We can tolerate doing things in a different way.

When Carol was diagnosed with a brain tumor, her reaction was, "I have three days to feel sorry for myself, then life goes on." I don't remember hardly any complaining about her illness. I married Bobby Jean within a year of Carol's death. Within another year, she was diagnosed with dementia and was told she could no longer drive. Her reaction was very different. Her constant complaining made our first couple of years very difficult. I tried to put myself in her shoes. As a nurse, she was well aware of what

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# FALL FARE

**Coming again to Alleluia  
November 5, 2016**

**Be watchful — Get prepared**



**More information to come...**

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the future held. I tried to think in terms of how I would react if I were the one with dementia. That and the grace of God helped me to minimize my complaining about her complaining. Again, tolerance and empathy are forms of forgiveness.

As you know, after Bobbie Jean's death, I married Edna. She is a wonderful woman and has been a blessing to me. But again, we do some things differently. A good example is driving, especially on long trips. I consider myself a conservative careful driver. If I am coming up on a slower moving vehicle, well ahead of time I check the left lane to see if it is clear and that no car is coming up on me that I will cut off if I pull out. Then, at a safe distance, I move into the pass-

ing lane and pass the vehicle. As soon as I can see both headlights in the rear view mirror, I move back into the right lane.

Edna is a more aggressive, compulsive driver. Of course, this is my perception. I have a tendency to offer suggestions. This is an irritant to me and to her. It has caused some of our biggest fights. My head has told me that since she has had no major accidents to let her drive her way. Again, this is merely a difference in the way we do things. We recently went on a nine-day trip. Since I like to drive, I do most of the driving. But I do get tired and let her drive. This has required me to shut my eyes and my mouth at certain times. This is a good thing because I am supposed to be resting my

eyes and taking a nap. We were still friends when we got home this time. She is improving. I hope it is my good example that is rubbing off. Again, tolerance as a form of forgiveness.

We should not tolerate sin or bad behavior. But when the things that irritate us are just someone else doing things differently, I believe that we should let things pass or just tolerate them. Tolerance, in my mind, is a form of forgiveness.

**Andy Beaudoin** is a retired product manager from Siemens Electronics. He has been a Full Covenant member of Alleluia Community since 2003. He has two girls, two boys, and four grandchildren and is married to Edna Beaudoin also a Full Covenant member. They attend Burns United Methodist Church in Augusta, Georgia.

# Election Prayer for Life

*O God, we acknowledge  
you today as Lord,  
Not only of individuals, but  
of nations and govern-  
ments.*

*We thank you for the privi-  
lege  
Of being able to organize  
ourselves politically  
And of knowing that politi-  
cal loyalty  
Does not have to mean dis-  
loyalty to you.*

*We thank you for your law,  
which our Founding  
Fathers acknowledged  
And recognized as higher  
than any human law.*

*We thank you for the op-  
portunity that this elec-  
tion year puts before us,  
To exercise our solemn  
duty not only to vote,  
But to influence countless  
others to vote,  
And to vote correctly.*

*Lord, we pray that your  
people may be awakened.  
Let them realize that while  
politics is not their salva-  
tion,  
Their response to you re-  
quires that they be politi-  
cally active.*

*Awaken your people to know  
that they are  
not called to be a sect fleeing  
the world  
But rather a community of  
faith renewing the world.*

*Awaken them that the same  
hands lifted up to you in  
prayer  
Are the hands that pull the  
lever in the voting booth;  
That the same eyes that read  
your Word  
Are the eyes that read the  
names on the ballot,  
And that they do not cease to  
be Christians  
When they enter the voting  
booth.*

*Awaken your people to a  
commitment to justice  
To the sanctity of marriage  
and the family,  
To the dignity of each indi-  
vidual human life,  
And to the truth that hu-  
man rights begin when  
human lives begin,  
And not one moment later.*

*Lord, we rejoice today  
That we are citizens of your  
kingdom.*

*May that make us all the  
more committed  
To being faithful citizens on  
earth.*

*We ask this through Jesus  
Christ our Lord. Amen.*

By Rev. Frank Pavone

Reprinted from [priestsforlife.org/](http://priestsforlife.org/)

## Correction

The September 5th *Dove* has a photo of Ross Ott and the article says, "Ross Ott finished installing new doors in the high school this week" and "Steve Alzheimer began the installation over the past weekend." In reality, Steve Alzheimer did all the work over multiple days with some assistance during the full community work party.

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