



PIER REVIEW

THE MINISTRY JOURNAL OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. LUKE, ORLANDO, FLORIDA

The Greatest of These Is Love

By The Rev. Canon J. Gary L'Hommedieu

AND NOW FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." Thus St. Paul concludes the most famous single chapter in Holy Scripture, if not in all literature.

The same "Love Chapter" is featured in nine out of ten Christian weddings. There is something safe and "Hallmark-like" about it—cheerful and heartwarming. As it is read, those who visit a church only at weddings nod approvingly.

Not many are aware that the love extolled in this chapter is the sacrificial *caritas* of charity, the *agápē* that drove Jesus to the cross. In the lofty (and often expensive) elegance of a church wedding this love is thought to be the height of human romance, the one expression of *eros* blessed by the church.

The same romance is gathered to the memory of St. Valentine, the name attached to Christian

heroes of both Eastern and Western tradition. Here again the costly *agápē* of the Christian martyr morphs into the warm fuzzy *eros* of the adorable cherub. (See "From Your Valentine", page 2.)

Let us remember that the same God who created *agápē* also created *eros*, along with all the other loves. (See "True Love", page 4.) Each has its proper place within the order of creation.

If not, we would have to conclude that one god created one love and another god created the other. Hence we have two caricatures of the God of the Bible: the mean, vengeful god of the Old Testament and the warm fuzzy god of the New. The warm fuzzy god inevitably turns into the cherub depicted on a greeting card—cheerful, decorative, but empty.

The present *Pier Review* celebrates all the loves that flow from the loving God of creation. We have a Valentine's greeting (page 2), passion (page 3), and truth (page 4). We have a full fledged love affair (page 5), an incursion of divine love in the form of healing (page 6), and the quiet love of duty and service (page 7).

The greatest of these is, of course, the love of God for unloveable sinners (John 3:16). When that love is the greatest of our loves, all the other loves fall into place, stirring our hearts, cementing our relationships, and commending the Lover of creation to others. PR

VOLUME 2 • NUMBER 2 • FEBRUARY 2009

The Greatest of These Is Love	page 1
From Your Valentine	page 2
Love With A Passion	page 3
True Love	page 4
A Love Affair in Stained Glass	page 5
On This Day the Lord Acted	page 6
A Labor of Love	page 7

From Your Valentine

Dean Clark outside his office in the Chapter House.

The Very Rev. Anthony P. Clark

VALENTINE'S DAY, FEBRUARY 14, IS likely the most popular "Hallmark Holiday" observed in the United States. But did you know that the story of Valentine's Day begins in the Third Century with an oppressive Roman Emperor and a humble Christian Martyr? The Emperor was Claudius II. The Christian was Valentinus.

Claudius had ordered all Romans to worship twelve gods, and he had made it a crime punishable by death to associate with Christians. But Valentinus was dedicated to the ideals of Christ, and not even the threat of death could keep him from practicing his beliefs. He was arrested and imprisoned.

During the last weeks of Valentinus' life, a remarkable thing happened. Seeing that he was a man of learning, the jailer asked whether his daughter, Julia, might be brought to Valentinus for lessons. She had been blind since birth.

Julia was a pretty young girl with a quick mind. Valentinus read stories of Rome's history to her. He taught her arithmetic and told her about God. She saw the world through his eyes, trusted in his wisdom, and found comfort in his quiet strength.

"Valentinus, does God really hear our prayers?" Julia said one day. "Yes, my child, He hears each one," he replied.

"Do you know what I pray for every morning and every night? I pray that I might see. I want so much to see

everything you've told me about!"

"God does what is best for us if we will only believe in Him," Valentinus said. "Oh, Valentinus, I do believe," Julia said intensely. "I do." She knelt and grasped his hand.

They sat quietly together, each praying. Suddenly there was a brilliant light in the prison cell. Radiant, Julia screamed, "Valentinus, I can see! I can see!"

"Praise be to God!" Valentinus exclaimed, and he knelt in prayer.

On the eve of his death, Valentinus wrote a last note to Julia, urging her to stay close to God, and he signed it "From Your Valentine." His sentence was carried out the next day, February 14, 270 A.D., near a gate that was later named Porta Valentini in his memory. He was buried at what is now the Church of Praxedes in Rome. It is said that Julia herself planted a pink-blossomed almond tree near his grave. Today, the almond tree remains a symbol of abiding love and friendship.

By the way, the above account of Valentine's Day was borrowed from a Hallmark greeting card!

PR

An icon of St. Valentine. Like similar depictions of St. Nicholas, Valentine appears in a drastically different pose than that normally associated with his February feast day.



Love With A Passion



Bob and Debra Brett, affectionately known as “the velcro couple”, inspire members of the Cathedral congregation with their simple, rock-solid commitment to their Lord and to each other. Bob (a member since 2003) serves on the Chapter Endowment Committee. Debra (a member since 2005) and Bob serve together as ushers and members of the Food Ministry. They served on the leadership team of Engaged Encounter in the Diocese until its recent hiatus. They live in Orlando with daughter Caroline (16 months).

By Debra Brett

BOB AND I HAVE BEEN HAPPILY MARRIED for four years this month. Although some of you might think it was “love at first sight” and a sweeping romance for us, God worked on our hearts for eight years. God knew we were meant to be together as husband and wife. We just had to find out through years of friendship, hardship, absence, confusion and finally, clarity. It was a journey which truly led us to treasure our marriage and our commitment to God, above all else.

As preparation for our marriage at the Cathedral, we attended the Episcopal Engaged Encounter retreat. At the time, we thought we already knew so much about each other and we weren’t convinced we would get a lot out of the retreat, except to check another item off our list of “Things To Do” before our wedding. However, God had other plans (doesn’t He always?!). As we drove away from the retreat site, we were both “on fire” about how the weekend impacted us and we knew from that moment on God was calling us to serve in marriage ministry, particularly in Engaged Encounter. We were asked to join the leadership team two years later when they expanded the team.

We are passionate about marriage. In marriage, we are called by God to love and serve each other unconditionally, totally and irrevocably. What an amazing opportunity we have to mirror God’s love for us! Bob and I strive to be lights of God’s love to our family and those around us.

This doesn’t mean marriage and love are always easy. It doesn’t mean there aren’t times when we look at each other cross-eyed. However, as we learned through our first Engaged Encounter retreat, the real goal of marriage isn’t happiness; it is unity. It is the result of the effort we put into making a daily decision to love and to be life-giving to each other. Unity is what binds us together when times get tough or when we don’t see eye-to-eye. We know we have the freedom to be ourselves and that we will still love each other unconditionally, totally and irrevocably. Unity breeds happiness.

When we are sharing such oneness with each other, we are also close to God. His gift of grace is what gives us the strength to overcome the struggles we may encounter as we strive for unity in our marriage. As we prepare to celebrate St. Valentine’s Day, we challenge you to find new ways to be life-giving to your spouse in your daily decision to love. How can you mirror God’s love through your marriage?

Bob and I know God has blessed us and we are honored to serve God through our marriage. We also hope to serve our Cathedral community by working to bring a marriage ministry to the Cathedral. We hope couples in all phases of engaged and married life will benefit by taking time to focus on cultivating unity and growing strong marriages. PR

In marriage, we are called by God to love and serve each other unconditionally, totally and irrevocably. What an amazing opportunity we have to mirror God’s love for us!



Judi bids a teary farewell to son Ian as he makes ready to leave for U.S. Navy boot camp last year. (Is it *storgē* or is it *agápē*?)

True Love

By Judi L'Hommedieu

THE ANCIENTS HAD THESE LOVES
plus one:
Storge, Philia and *Eros*.

It is this eager last that brings me, Lord,
in the utter stillness of this middle watch
to lay me down to sleep.
My body aches to rest from labor
that brought this tiny image of yourself
into the world.

Instead of rest I nurse, and tend, and nurse again
And admit I did not heed the mothers' words
"you do not know . . ."
The ancient curse of Eve and Adam,
endless rounds of needy pleas:
birthright of my newborn child.

Love, Joy, Tenderness: Those first, bright stirrings
now drown in fog of work and numb fatigue.
In their place live Sadness and Despair
— and lastly Shame;
that draws unbidden tears leaking from my eyes
testament to all-consuming weariness.

Ah, Self, where is the love? what have you done?
Could you not keep from wanting
and thus keep back the dark emotions of the soul,
retaining just the ancient loves?

Eternal One, I pray that these: the needing
and the wanting,
are not the final measure.

I turn at last and see you, Perfect Man.
In the garden on your knees, alone in the night watch
you did not shrink back or hide the feelings
in your heart,
and though your sorrow brought forth drops of blood
as from a mortal wound,
You brought them boldly to the Father's heart
and said,
Take this from me, yet . . . not my will, but Thine.

Thank you, Lord, for opening my eyes
to reveal the ancient fourth and greatest love,
an active Love,

Agape is the final truth:
In darkness deep the baby cries, and I go once more:
The lover's act in care of the beloved.

Author's comment. One of the lessons of Divine Drama II touches on the four Greek words for love and their meanings. Most of us have a rough understanding of *eros*: that emotion-generated, physical attraction sort of love (this is what most of us mean when we speak of being "in love"); and *philia* (from which we get "philanthropy"), commonly referred to as "brotherly" or "platonic love", often citing the biblical example of the friendship between David and Jonathan. The next is probably new to most:

storgē (stor-gay) is that rough and tumble affection found in family life: parents for children, children for each other. (I am reminded of a litter of puppies tumbling around one another good-naturedly.) And then there is *agápē*: acting to the benefit of another, despite one's feelings toward that person or that person's feelings toward you. This is what the biblical narrative teaches us is real love: it is not a feeling, but a behavior, an act of the will. It is this love that we ask for when we seek to become more and more like Him. PR

A Love Affair In Stained Glass

By Ellen M. Smith

ON THE FIRST SUNDAY EVENING IN February, 1958, St. Luke's young adults greeted their newest member, Dan Smith, as they gathered in the parlor to finalize plans for their Valentine Dance in the Great Hall. Eager to welcome the new guy, the decorating committee signed him up to hang balloons and streamers. Thus began a life-long love affair with the church.

Dan was confirmed on Easter Day 1958. On January 17, 1959, he married Ellen McGee (from the dance committee). His love for the church moved him from usher to acolyte to Jr. Warden and finally to Parish Administrator (1965-1985). When computers took over the bookkeeping in 1985, Dan became Assistant to the Dean and was made an honorary lay canon. He held that position until his death July 2, 2005.

That Fall the St. Elizabeth Guild spoke to Ellen about creating a stained glass window for the Children's Chapel in memory of Dan. It made sense. Dan loved the children. He knew them by name. They loved his big hugs. They also respected the boundaries he set for them. Manipulation didn't work with Dan.

Ellen knew the window would have to involve input from the children. Deciding that broken glass and children do not mix well, she took the project to the EYC. They embraced the idea. After talking about what St. Luke's means to them and discussing color, ideas etc., Ellen came up with a design that they approved and the work began. EYC kids worked on the window the month of February, 2006. After



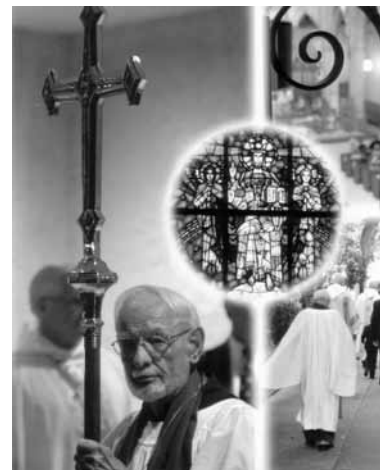
"This is dedicated to the one I love." The untitled stained glass was begun in February, 2006 and completed in December, 2008. It is constructed in three panels, with upper and lower portions, according to the following themes: upper left, Fellowship; lower left, Fun; upper right, Learning; lower right, Serving; center, Worship. Members of the EYC came up with these themes in their tribute to the late Canon Dan Smith. According to their recollection, the themes named capture what the Church meant to Dan.

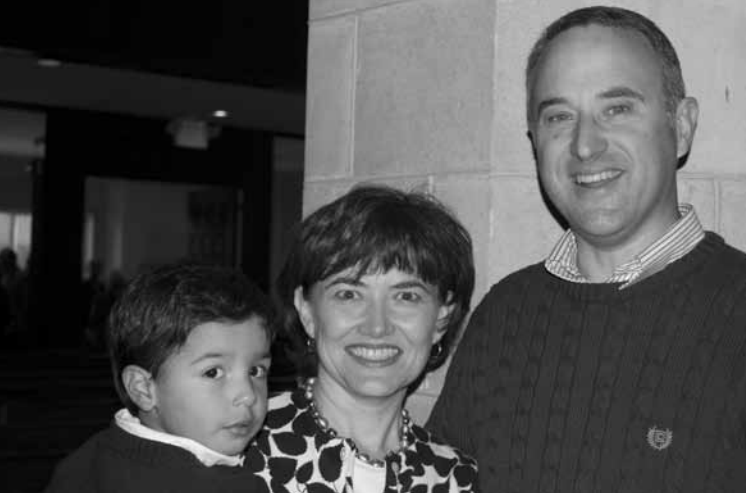
that it became the project of Ellen Smith with help from Zachary Combs, Jason Tittles, and Irene Akerman. Without a deadline progress was steady but very slow. It was finished and installed in December, 2008.

Ellen will tell you it is a labor of love. She loved working on it, partly from the process of seeing it spring to life and partly from the ideas depicted. The central theme is Worship. From that comes Fun, Fellowship, Learning and Serving—all of which are clanging symbols without a foundation of LOVE (see 1 Corinthians 13:1). It is what our kids are learning at St. Luke, and it is what they learned from Dan.

It is so appropriate for the window to be dedicated this month, almost 51 years to the day after a most memorable Valentine's Day! PR

Lower left: On September 30, 1985 Dan and Ellen cut some rug at a country music barbecue held in Dan's honor on the occasion of his retirement as Cathedral Administrator after 20 years of service and his appointment as Assistant to the Dean. **Lower right:** a collage created in memory of Dan and presented to Ellen by Bryan and Julia Stewart, members of the Cathedral.





Andrew, Betty, and Lanny Conley put on a glow on their way out of church. Betty and Lanny have been members of the Cathedral since 1999.

On This Day The Lord Acted

By Ellen M. Smith

HOW CRITICAL IS IT?" BETTY ASKED THE ICU doctor. He quietly replied, "It can't get much worse."

It was Friday night April 25. Lanny had come into the hospital emergency room on Tuesday, April 22, when the tingling in his hands and feet began to turn into paralysis. He was having trouble walking and holding things.

A battery of tests revealed his condition to be Guillain-Barré Syndrome, probably triggered by a virus he had a few weeks earlier. It causes the immune system to attack nerve endings. It is not often fatal but the syndrome had come on so rapidly that Lanny's body systems were shutting down.

In spite of the doctor's remark it did get worse. By Saturday morning pneumonia had set in. A dark cloud of death hung over the room as hospital attendants quietly came and went. In spite of the heavy atmosphere Betty had a sense of peace and God's presence. She knew many were praying for Lanny.

Word had gone out to Reformed Theological Seminary, Lanny's workplace, and to his church. The Cathedral Women's Retreat, meeting that weekend in Palm Coast, turned into a prayer vigil. Cathedral clergy went beyond their pastoral care responses to be present with their prayer support. At RTS where Lanny is Registrar, students and staff became a solid prayer group. At Florida Hospital chaplains, nurses, and technicians offered prayers. Prayer support e-mails were pouring in from Scotland, Uganda and wherever RTS students were dispersed. Lanny and Betty knew they were in God's hands. Betty said she was sustained "beyond knowing."

On Sunday, April 27, Betty opened her book, *The Divine Hours*, to the day's Morning Office which included

a reading of the prophet Isaiah's words as recorded in Matthew 8:17: "He himself bore our sickness away and carried our diseases." Then Psalm 118: "On this day the Lord has acted." The words spoke to her. Betty knew Lanny was healed.

The nurses and technicians began noting changes in his direction. This was confirmed by the doctor. On that day Lanny began to heal. His turn-around was sudden, but recovery took time. His rehab therapist called him a "miracle." The doctors were astounded but not saying much, except that his age (45) and general good health were in his favor.

Although many Guillain-Barré patients live with lingering nerve issues, Lanny has had no remaining problems. His strength and energy gradually returned, and before long he was ready to move on in his life. He returned to work July 7.

I asked Lanny and Betty how this episode has affected them.

"Through this experience and the amazing outpouring of love and support that was shown to us, God reminded us of the many blessed connections with which He has enriched our lives across the years. We have a deeper love for our church family along with a new understanding of the power of prayer and of God's healing mercy. We were also reminded that, even in life's darkest hours, the Living Christ abides with us, sustaining and granting his perfect peace."

Betty and Lanny Conley can often be seen on Sunday mornings as Ushers. They are the ones wearing the glow of God's *shekina* glory. PR

A Labor Of Love



Those familiar with the Cathedral on Sunday mornings refer to the narthex area as “Bob’s World”. Bob and Ethel Borders became members of the Cathedral in 1985. Bob, who has served in many capacities, is best known as Head Usher, a post he has held since 1992.

By The Rev. Christine L. Maddux

WHAT IN THE WORLD PROMPTS A volunteer to get to the Cathedral every Sunday by 7 a.m., to spend the whole morning there working steadily behind the scenes, and to keep that commitment for decades? It must be love. That certainly is true for Bob Borders, Head Usher and Junior Warden.

ANSWERING THE CALL

Bob and Ethel Borders came to Orlando from Ohio in 1981, and worshipped at the Cathedral for the first time on Dean Sherman’s first Sunday there. Two years later Bob joined the Ushers, under the leadership of Bob Britt. When the Britts moved away, Bob accepted Dean Lobs’ call to become Head Usher. Ever since, Bob has made it his goal to serve the Dean and the congregation by providing the peaceful, organized and orderly atmosphere we enjoy as we gather for worship every Sunday. “Whatever I do ushering is small enough payment for all I’ve received at the Cathedral,” he said. “The church service is like a huge tapestry, and every stitch is important.”

PUTTING LIFE EXPERIENCE TO WORK

He instituted a regular rotation of ushers, with nine serving each Sunday. They are chosen to echo the family orientation of the Cathedral, including husbands and wives, singles, fathers and sons, and youth. “We need to thank the ushers,” Bob said, “because they give their Sunday mornings to serve, knowing that their own worship will be interrupted by their duties.”

Besides those usual duties, there is sometimes an unusual one, such as a medical emergency or a disruptive individual. Bob and the ushers handle these situations swiftly, professionally, and quietly, for the comfort and safety of all. Some of those protocols draw on Bob’s 30 years of prior experience as Commandant of the Veterans’ Home for the state of Ohio, an experience which also developed his capacity for working with all kinds of people. “I know this much,” Bob said, “you’ve never seen everything!”

LOVE’S MANY LABORS

Besides supervising his domain in the narthex, Bob covers a lot of other ground in service to the Cathedral. He can be seen transporting banners, lighting torches, solving microphone problems, and helping the Altar Guild by lifting heavy items in the chancel. “Those are the kinds of things [Canon] Dan Smith used to do for so many years,” Bob said, “so I try to carry on for him in that same spirit.”

Bob’s service carries beyond Sunday, too. Early Monday morning he is back at the Cathedral to help process the alms collection. And these days he is on campus early every weekday morning as Junior Warden to open up the property for the crews working on the lighting and landscaping project. “I have the time to do the on-site work as Junior Warden,” Bob said. But it takes more than time; it takes real dedication. Bob sums up his labor of love modestly and with a wry smile:

“It’s little enough to do, for my space on earth.”

**I know this much:
you’ve never
seen everything!**

Bob at his familiar post in the cathedral narthex



pier \pîr\ *n.*

1. *Architecture* Any of various vertical supporting structures, especially:
 - a. A pillar supporting an arch or roof.
 - b. The portion of a wall between windows, doors, or other openings.
 - c. A reinforcing structure that projects from a wall; a buttress.
2. *Literature* The monthly ministry journal of The Cathedral Church of St. Luke, Orlando, Florida.
 - a. Editor/Designer
The Rev. Canon J. Gary L'Hommedieu
 - b. Contributing Writers
The Rev. Christine L. Maddux
Ellen M. Smith
 - c. Proof Readers
Rosemary Atwater and Theo Gordon
 - d. Photographs
The Rev. Canon J. Gary L'Hommedieu
The Rev. Michael Matheny

LENT AT A GLANCE

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

7:00 AM, 12 and 7:30 PM Holy Eucharist and Liturgy of Ashes

WEDNESDAYS BEGINNING MARCH 4

5:45 PM. Evening Prayer (St. Mary Chapel)

6:15 PM Supper

7:00 PM Peacemakers Lenten Program (Great Hall)

FRIDAYS BEGINNING MARCH 6

7:00 PM The Way of the Cross (Cathedral)

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

6:00 PM Lenten Vespers Concert

Cathedral Choir and the Stetson University Symphony Orchestra perform sacred music of the modern era. Hear the exquisite cantata *Lux aeterna* by Morten Lauridsen, plus anthems by Paul Halley, Peter Mathews, and Benjamin Lane.

In memory of former Cathedral Choir member Dr. Thomas Scott, sponsored by his family and friends.

TUESDAY, APRIL 7

7:30 PM Corporate Rite of Reconciliation (Cathedral)