

## Service Sunday 2010

### **Variations on Galatians 5:13:**

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another.

(NRSV)

It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows.

(The Message)

For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

(New Living Translation)

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

(King James Version)

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

(English Standard Version)

My brothers and sisters, God called you to be free, but do not use your freedom as an excuse to do what pleases your sinful self. Serve each other with love.

(New Century Version)

### **Call to Worship/Call and Response**

*Can be read in rhythm to the beat of a drum, or snapping of fingers:*

Reader 1: Serve one another.

Reader 2: Love one another.

Reader 3: Serve one another.

Reader 4: Rejoice in one another.

Reader 2: Serve one another.

Reader 1: Laugh with one another.

Reader 3: Serve one another.

Reader 2: Call one another.

Reader 4: Serve one another.

Reader 3: Pray for one another.

Reader 1: Serve one another

Reader 4: Worship with one another.

All: Serve one another in love.

~ Sharon Flaten, BVS Volunteer for Recruitment, Unit #277

*Scripture Jam:*

Speaker 1: "You, my brothers..."

Speaker 2: my sisters, my family

Speaker 3: my friends

Speaker 1: "...were called to be free"

Speaker 2: unhampered, liberated, unconfined, unconstrained

Speaker 3: unobstructed, unfettered, independent, free-wheeling

Speaker 1: "But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature"

Speaker 2: Don't spend your time thinking about yourself

Speaker 3: Don't spend your time running from God

Speaker 1: "Rather, serve one another in love"

Speaker 2: Care for one another in love, honor one another in love

Speaker 3: Support one another in love, comfort one another in love

Speaker 1: "The entire law is summed up in a single command"

Speaker 2: Just to make it easy

Speaker 3: To wrap it up with a nice little bow

Speaker 1: "Love your neighbor as yourself"

Speaker 2: As Jesus did

Speaker 3: So do we

All: Love your neighbor as yourself, Serve one another in love

~ Audrey Hollenberg, National Youth Conference Coordinator, Unit #284

## **Quotes**

*"The demands of love present themselves constantly and simultaneously and without any order. Here is a hungry old man for whom I have a little love and who has come to ask for food which I am keeping for the supper of my much-loved children: how am I to weigh the present demand of a feeble love against the future demand of a stronger...Future love does not exist. Love is a present activity only."*

- Tolstoy, as quoted by Douglas Schuurman in Vocation

*Living in community is hard. Sometimes it's the hardest thing I've ever done. It is very challenging. It is not easy, but it forces you (at least it did for me) to find a piece of yourself that you may not have known existed before."*

-Matt Maclay, L'Arche Community in Dublin, Ireland, Unit #282

## **Volunteer Reflections/Stories**

### *Learning Love and Peace through Community*

Living with others should be something that comes naturally to social human beings, but in our culture today this mission is a lot more complex than it ought to be. Living in community takes work and effort that on some days is a lot harder than others. After a rough day at work, sometimes the last thing I want is to be with people. But by surrounding myself

with a strong support group, I have people who are there for me on days when I don't want to be alone.

Living in community has taught me so many lessons about love. I'm not talking about superficial commercial-love, but the nitty-gritty, down-to-earth, ahimsa - love. Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati Maharaj, a Hindi guru, said, "Ahimsa is not mere negative non-injury. It is positive, cosmic love. It is the development of a mental attitude in which hatred is replaced by love. Ahimsa is true sacrifice. Ahimsa is forgiveness. Ahimsa is Sakti (power). Ahimsa is true strength" (<http://www.dlshq.org/teachings/ahimsa.htm>). These days, leadership is seen as having power and influence over others, but I have learned the importance of getting along with others and the amount of work it takes. I know the greatness of getting along with others because of how often I fail at it. But messing up and learning how to make amends is such an important part of the process. There is something very humbling and constructive about being a part of something larger than myself, and community is just that.

Living in the BVS house in Elgin is the closest I have been to having to living out my belief in Christ like peace. Living peacefully in the house means giving up certain things, but it also means that you receive more than you ever expected. Living peacefully in the house means being quiet and listening, but it also means sharing concerns and complaints with house members in a respectful, constructive manner. Living peacefully in the house means giving all you have for the good of the community, but it also means sharing your needs and getting them met in ways that you never expect. Living in community exercises all aspects of living peacefully.

Living in community is hard, but it stretches me more than I could have imagined. I am learning how to express my opinion respectfully, to actively listen, and to enjoy the companionship of others. But of course I am also learning how to humbly apologize when I fall short and balance my wants and needs with those of the whole community. These are some of the most important life lessons that a person can learn. Also, the way in which I love will never be the same. As the song goes, "Love the one[s] you're with."

- Audrey Hollenberg, National Youth Conference Coordinator, Unit #284

### *Around the Table*

It's suppertime, and the four of us are gathered at the table. Laura, in all of her culinary prowess, is treating us to sweet potato and black bean burritos, complete with homemade whole wheat tortillas. Christmas lights strung next door peek through the curtains reminding us of the approaching holidays. Katie talks about her day and Anne queries the cook about the tortilla recipe. I ask for seconds. It's a good evening to be a Cincinnati BVSer.

As much as I enjoy the vittles, the next part of the evening is even better. This is when, without scheduling it or anything, we simply talk. We hang out at the table, dirty dishes and cooling pots in front of us, and talk about whatever happens to cross our minds. Discussion can run the gamut, covering everything from modern day pacifism to downtown bus routes. Tonight the conversation turns toward our weekly devotions; Katie and Laura have a few ideas on a relaxation practice that they might want to try. It segues to me telling them about my morning escapade of forgetting to take out the trash and running the bag out to the truck in my slippers. Anne chimes in with the details

that I forget from when she heard the story earlier.

During these times I am reminded of why I chose to uproot once again and move from Pennsylvania to Cincinnati. Here in this intentional community we are learning to appreciate one another's presence, his or her stories, and invest ourselves in the lives of those with whom we live. Not every day is a walk in the park and I didn't come here expecting this to be effortless. Life experiences tell me, though frustrating as it may be, that we learn more from making it through the rough days, not the easy ones. We have our differences from time to time, but I generally like these three new friends assembled around the table who have undertaken this journey with me.

Through our commitment to Brethren Volunteer Service and this communal living situation, we have come here seeking to live peacefully with those in our neighborhood and beyond. The comforts of living the lucrative life of a middle-class American are weighed as we endeavor to lead a simpler existence. Here at the table we gather together in solidarity to share our stories, beliefs, and selves.

Peacefully, simply, we have come together to this table. Blessings to you as you seek and share at your own tables.

- Ben Bear, Cincinnati Community House, Unit #277

## **Invocations and Prayers**

Abba, I pray that You would give us Your eyes of understanding, a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Your eyes of love, to see one another as You see us. And out of a heart that beats in tune with Yours, may we live in the radical expression of unity and purity of love. No longer will we tear down but delight in the call to lay down our very lives for one another.

~ Haley McCoy, Unit #277

God,  
you call us into freedom  
and into service.  
But,  
isn't a servant bound, and not free?  
You call us into freedom  
and into love.  
But, doesn't love bind us, and strap us down?  
God,  
your call is often hard to make out.  
We are usually unsure what, exactly, you mean.  
Teach us, Lord:  
how to be free,  
how to serve,  
how to love;

how to serve one another, freely, in love.

Amen.

~ Dana Cassell, BVS Staff for Vocation and Community Living, Unit #277

Dear Lord,

Help us follow the path that Jesus walked

To learn what needs to be done

To serve others

To connect with our church and our community

To care for those who suffer

To know ourselves

To share our gifts

To love one another

To seek and embrace peace

Amen

~ Kathleen Campanella,

*(Director of Partner and Public Relations at New Windsor Conference Center)*

Loving God,

We are called to serve others and by doing so we show Your love to those who need it the most: the poor, the hungry, the sick, the naked, the lost. Thank you for this calling. Thank you for the ability to serve others with the resources we have at our fingertips, the courage to step beyond our comfortable lives, and the love pouring from our hearts. Guide us as we discern your call to service and what that means to us personally and as a congregation. Lead us down your path, Lord, encouraging us as we show Christ to others when we serve.

Amen.

Sing Hymn # 307 *Will You Let Me Be Your Servant*

~Rebekah Houff, BVS Unit #275

*Response Prayer:*

Oh God, my Creator,

Thank you for not only giving me life but also for giving me one of freedom.

My gratitude cannot exclaim how glad I am.

Please help me in all that I do,

To choose the right path in my journey through life

And to do good in the world and serve others around me.

Help me to walk with my fellow (wo)man

And not be afraid to serve them and them me;  
Each of us Gods children, trying to live our lives as Christ lived His.

Please walk with me through this journey,  
Help me not to stray from the path,  
To give all that I have in time, energy and resources  
To my fellow sisters and brothers.

Bring us together through our service to one another  
As a family and community of your children  
Living together serving one another  
And creating a beloved community here on Earth

Thank you, Oh God my Creator.

Amen.

~Jill Hutton, Trees for Life, Unit #282

## **Benediction**

**Leader: We have been called to be free**

**People: We have been called to use that freedom in service**

**Leader: Service to our families**

**People: Service to our neighbors**

**Leader: Service to our world**

**People: Service to our God**

**Leader: Let us remember this attitude of freedom and service in our words,  
actions and lives this week.**

**People: Amen.**

~ Emily Laprade, National Youth Conference Coordinator, Unit #282