

Valentine's Day Message from Archbishop Anne 2023



Valentine's Day cut out hearts by Scarlett for Aunty Anne

*"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never ends." (1 Cor. 13. 7-8)*

Happy Valentine's Day!

We're told we can say 'it' or show 'it' and really mean 'it' with a kiss, a card, chocolates, flowers, perfume, a great dinner, a night out on the town, and in a million other ways as well. The 'it' being "I love you," of course.

In a delightful "PEANUTS" cartoon strip, Lucy says to Schroeder, "Guess what...If you don't tell me that you love me, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to hold my breath until I pass out!"

Looking up from his piano, Schroeder informs her, "Breath-holding children is an interesting phenomenon... It could indicate a metabolic disorder... A forty milligram dose

of Vitamin B6 twice a day might be helpful...I think that's probably it... You need Vitamin B6...you might also consider eating more bananas, avocados and beef liver..."

As he goes back to his piano, Lucy sighs, "I ask for love, and all I get is beef liver!"

It's a cute, silly cartoon but its message rings true. The world over, people are crying out to be loved. Love is all anyone wants, but it is not so easy to find, and these days it is in very short supply. It is why there is war, famine and disease; why children are starving; why the opioid crisis is spiralling out of control; why relationships are breaking down; why violent crime is escalating; why our youth are dying by suicide; why our planet is burning up; why we've become a consumer society needing more and more stuff. There are hundreds of other contributing factors as to why these things are occurring, but in the end it all comes down to an absence of love.

The world is desperate for love. Wanting love. Needing love. Craving love.

If you watched the Super Bowl game on Sunday you might have noticed two commercials titled, *He Gets Us*, slipped in between the star studded half time show and the other pricey advertisements. Shown at a cost of \$100 million by a group of private investors they're all about Jesus, aimed at encouraging people in this moment of division and confusion to look for a different way to live. They portray Jesus as someone with whom they can identify - an immigrant, a refugee, an activist fighting for women's rights, a bulwark against racial injustice, someone living on the margins.

The advertisement that really caught my attention is this one titled, *He Gets Us AI*. The producers asked an Artificial Intelligence to describe love. It came up with all kinds of flowery images and pictures - the kind we will see on Valentine's Day.

Then they asked the Artificial Intelligence to visualize love the way Jesus portrayed it.

What came up was this:

Imagine# Forgiving a friend who betrayed you.

Imagine# Feeding the hungry.

Imagine# Eating dinner with outcasts.

Imagine# Helping a neighbour in need.

Imagine# Clothing the poor.

The advertisement ends with these words, "Imagine a man lays down his life for his friends. Jesus' love was never artificial."

You can check it out here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUngI7QyeHY>

This is love that is real and is the kind of love that Paul writes about in his first letter to the Corinthians. It is the highest love of all, known by its Greek name, *Agape love*. This is the love that God has for us, and is the kind of love that God asks of us to 'do' to others. Without this kind of love everything else in our lives is useless.

Agape love does not want; it gives.

Agape love is not empty; it is full to overflowing.

Agape love does not champ at the bit; it is patient.

Agape love is not self-serving; it seeks the well-being of others.

Agape love is never jealous or boastful or rude; it is kind.

Agape love does not love 'because'; it simply loves.

Agape love bears all things; up to its own crucifixion.

Agape love is extraordinarily powerful.

Agape love is God's love for humankind and is that unconditional, transforming, no-matter-what kind of love we long for.

Agape love is without end because it holds within it the essence of God.

This *Agape love* is the most precious thing I have ever received in my life and is the kind of love I wish for you on Valentine's Day.

My love is with you all in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

+Anne

Archbishop of Algoma and Moosonee

Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario

February 14th, 2023.