

Serve in Love

Recently, I was beginning my supper break as a culinary server at an assisted living center. “Sit here,” several residents called to me. “Thank you,” I said, clearing a spot. I work at making sure their small, specific wants and needs are met, like extra ice in their water, caramel syrup on their ice cream, or a strawberry malt to go. “Does anyone need anything before I sit down?” I asked.

In my efforts to be helpful, I secretly wondered if I was being annoyingly cheerful or too “Iowa nice.” In the course of our conversation about the weather and the events of the day, they answered my concerns. One resident said, offhandedly: “Even more than the quality of the food, it makes a difference *how* we are served, if we are treated with respect. *How* matters! Kindness makes the food taste better.” The others agreed.

As I endeavor to sustain consistent, heartfelt cheerfulness in my workaday tasks and my community projects (like the volunteer on the front cover), I know why I try to serve from the heart. I seek to give cups of cold water (or lukewarm, upon request) with gratitude because of Christ’s sacrifice, as affirmed in 1 Peter 1:20-23:

“He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God” (NIV).

—Janis Pyle
Nevada, Iowa

Text for today: “If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God. Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply *from the heart*. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:17-23, NRSV). **Bible readings for today:** Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23 (22); Luke 24:13-35.