



St. Anne
CATHOLIC
COMMUNITY

February 14, 2010
Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time
St Valentine Day—Roman Martyrology

“Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is the Lord” Jeremiah 17:7

Dear Friends;

Happy Valentine’s Day! There was a time when religion and culture were intertwined—holy days were holidays. One vestige of that time is Valentine’s Day.

In the year 269 AD there was a persecution of the early Church by the Roman Emperor. It seems as if there were two men by the name of Valentine who were martyred at that time. One was bishop of the Italian town of Terni. In those days to be bishop was to be more than a chief executive in a religious organization. It was to be a target. Often as leader of the community the bishop would often die in a persecution, laying down his life in the hopes that other Christians would not be hunted down.

The other Valentine was a presbyter, i.e. a priest, in the Church in Rome. Legend says that from prison he sent letters of comfort and encouragement to his congregation who lived in fear of persecution. This may be where the custom of sending “valentines” originated.

The romantic aspect of this day comes from Medieval England. It was thought that on the Feast of St. Valentine the birds would choose their mates for the springtime. Therefore it was a good day to choose a sweetheart.

Today is also the last Sunday that we will sing “Alleluia” until Easter. Lent begins this week with the observance of Ash Wednesday. So today we celebrate the burial of the Alleluia. Lent is a time for us to reflect on the experience of our faith in Jesus. We are called to place him as the center and love of our lives.

We discover Jesus through our **worship**, through **connecting** with others, **growing** in our knowledge and love, and **servicing**. We have opportunities do this throughout the year but during Lent we will have additional opportunities to renew our efforts. There will be services this Ash Wednesday, Stations of the Cross each Wednesday in English and Fridays in Spanish. We are also offering two retreat opportunities.

On Friday Evening and Saturday **March 5 & 6, Meeting the Merciful Lord: a Lenten Encounter on the Labyrinth**. Marydith Chase from St. Philip Church in Bakersfield will facilitate this retreat for both “novice walkers” and those who are already familiar with the spirituality of the labyrinth. This is an opportunity to learn and practice “centering prayer.”

On Saturday March 13 Stephanie Moore and I will facilitate a **Strengths Retreat** this will be an opportunity to take the *Clifton Strengths Finder* and to reflect on my gifts, talents and God’s personal call to me.

Today and always may we celebrate and deepen love in all its forms. For when we love especially laying down our lives for others we come to look like Jesus who is God’s valentine to us.

Peace, Love, Joy!

Fr. Ron