

Get Involved: Pray



EMBRACE Prayer Group February 2014

February brings a welcome promise that spring is on its way as the days lengthen. Birds begin to build nests and express their love in morning song. With St Valentine's Day approaching the shops are filled with romantic cards. Suddenly love and romance are all around.

St Paul gives a description of love in his letter to the Corinthians which is timeless and true and surely touches every tender heart that reflects on it. He tells us that love is patient and kind, that it is not rude or proud or selfish, bad tempered or self interested and it keeps no record of wrongs. True love is always ready to hope, to believe and to trust.

Love crosses boundaries. It is prepared to take risks. It seeks the best for others. It is a universal human desire to be loved and accepted. Invariably those who have come to Northern Ireland have left behind family and loved ones. Some will feel bereft; others will seize the opportunity to develop new relationships. Almost all desire to be loved and accepted as an integral part of their new community.

That's where God's people come in. We have an opportunity to express the love of Christ to those who are seeking to experience true love and total acceptance. Like St Paul's description of love in his letter to the Corinthian church, our love should not be from selfish motives or a desire to make the other "the same as us". EMBRACE holds that true Christian love crosses boundaries and takes risks in welcoming and accepting others. True love attracts people, inspires them, enables them to discover who they are and what God has intended for them. Selfish paternalistic distortions of love repel and undermine hope, belief and trust.

So when you are passing the card shops with the hearts in the window and maybe even buying one for a beloved maybe take a few moments to reflect on the gift of love received in your life, and the opportunities to give real, nurturing and lasting love this February and throughout the year.

Contributed by Patricia Carty

This month we give thanks for:

- The love that God has showered upon us
- A new spring and new opportunities to build and to form loving relationships
- The joy and colour that diversity in relationships can bring to our lives and communities

We pray for:

- People experiencing difficulties in relationships
- People who are separated for any reason from the person that they love
- For all those falling in love that their love may be just as described by St Paul
- For those in cross cultural relationships, that people will be very sensitive to each others backgrounds
- That families from different traditions will welcome diversity and respect the choices of family members to marry outside their own community