

Love Letters

My dad was smitten with my mom from the first time he saw her. In fact, family lore has it that he got a ticket for going through a stop sign because he couldn't stop looking at her on their first date. When he was away from the family in the Navy during World War II, he wrote her tender love letters that Mom treasured and still has.

When my husband and I were courting, we often sent each other love notes. I kept them all. Women keep those kinds of things, I thought, and was surprised after he died to discover a folder he kept, simply titled "Love Angela." Inside were all the notes I had ever written to him.

When my son was dating his wife, he put his love letter into music "To the Ineffable," complete with a score handwritten on parchment, rolled up and sealed with wax with a red rose tucked inside.

My son-in-law used paper lunch bags as his mode of giving special mementos of his love to my daughter who always knew something special was happening when she saw a brown paper lunch bag.

Falling in love brings out the better parts of ourselves, the softer, romantic side of all of us. It puts a spring in our step and a lilt in our spirits and we cherish those things that remind us that we are loved. Just thinking about our love letters or rereading them brings memories and an automatic smile to our faces.

Could that be how God feels when we read and spend time with the Bible, God's love letters to us? Though billions of people before us and now have read and meditated on the Bible, it

still has a special message for each one of us. We are all unique and special to God, flesh of God's imaginings and the Bible is full of messages of that love, even when we sin and try to run away from God.

Hosea's fidelity to his wife Gomer who was unfaithful to him mirrors God's love. I'll take you away to the desert. It will be just you and me and I'll woo you back...I taught you to walk and lifted you to my cheek. I can't let go of you—you're mine.

There's the famous line in Isaiah, "even if a mother should forget her child. I will never forget you. I have written you on the palm of my hand." And the parable of the prodigal son, who turns his back on his father, grabs his inheritance, dissipates his life in carousing and comes back home to a father who tucks in his garment and runs to meet him. Then he hugs him to his chest and throws a big party.

What kind of crazy God is this? One who chooses to

become flesh and pitch his tent among us and even lay down his life for us? This God of ours is a consummate lover. And our God wants to be loved. While serving breakfast on the beach after the resurrection, Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?" Can it be that God really wants my love? The Bible seems to say so.

There's no lover quite like God. None can even begin to compare. And God wants to live in each one of us. As St. John says, "God is love and whoever abides in love, abides in God, and God in him." I can't think of a better love letter than this.

—Angela Anno, Pastoral Associate

