How do you say, “I love you”? Love is perhaps the most real thing we know, the most real thing we search for, yet, ya can’t find it in a store, ya can’t put it in a box, ya can’t even draw an accurate picture of it, ’cause love’s not an object that occupies time and space.

Still, even if ya can’t see it or hold it in your hands, when ya feel it, when you’re in it, love is something ya need to show, something ya need to see. And so we embrace and we kiss; we send flowers and chocolates; we plan surprises and go out of our way to do kindnesses; we speak endearing words and write soaring sentiments; we give rings and wear a diamond … all to show, to remind, to tell the world and the beloved “I love you”!!

Jesus, the Son of God, was not some ethereal Spirit, but a real flesh and blood human being, a man who got tired and a man who got angry and frustrated, a man who felt and showed love powerfully and deeply: He touched an untouchable leper and heled him; He fed 5,000 hungry souls on His words of hope and filled their stomachs on just a few loaves of bread and a coupla little fish; He hugged little kids others thought of as brats; He mixed His own spit with the clay of the earth to make a poultice for a blind man’s eyes and the man saw the light; when His friend who had comforted Him and welcomed Him and kept His confidences died suddenly, He wept real tears of grief; at the Last
Supper when He was facing betrayal and arrest and death, He washed the tired, dusty feet of the friends who had walked with Him all over Palestine for the last three years; and after the Resurrection, He breathed on His scared little band the breath of God, the Holy Spirit, and they were frightened no more.

And what do we have now, we who are descendants of those first beloved friends of Jesus? We have the Gospel. We have the Church. We have the sacraments. Too many of think that the sacraments are nothing but empty rituals, relics from the past, ceremonies and milestones that are too long and too confusing.

But, they’re love letters – Jesus is still using physical signs to say, “I love you” and they come from real situations, and speak to real life!

At His Baptism in the Jordan, those who were there thought they heard a thunder, some called it a voice: “This is my beloved Son” and they saw the Spirit of God like a dove descend upon a young man standing in the water. The first Christians felt that if they too stood in the waters, they could live as the sons and daughters of God and receive God’s Spirit for strength and so, there was Baptism.

Jesus always invited all sortsa folk to eat with Him, the clean and the dirty, the rich and the poor, the righteous and the sinners, women and men and kids, slaves and freeborn ... it made no difference to Him. Even on the last night of His earthly life, He invited weaklings, deniers, and a traitor to eat with Him and told them to remember and do likewise. The first Christians broke bread together, shared what they had and so, there was Eucharist.
Jesus prayed, laid His hands on people, healed the broken, forgave every kind of weakness, called people to follow Him in a new world order, and, some did follow Him: married and ordained; single and young; old and sick; saintly and screw-up. To those first Christians, Jesus was the sacrament of God for them, and they, as Church now became the sacrament of Jesus for others, and so, there was Anointing and Penance, Marriage and Holy Orders, all Confirmed by the Holy Spirit of the Risen Jesus.

Life is mostly just a lotta ordinary stuff: one more day o’ school; one more day at work; another practice to sweat through; another load o’ laundry; another meal to fix; another night with too little sleep … but, along the way, there’s love!! There’s love in Mom and Dad, brothers and sisters and friends, a special woman or a great guy, and there’s ways to show how very much we care: a birthday remembered, an anniversary toasted, a gift, a card, a surprise, a milestone marked.

We may not see God or even feel God all the time – it may just be ordinary and feel like we’re on our own, but God loves us and Jesus shows us and Spirit fills us and graces us in these sacraments, these seven down-to-earth ways for God to say, over and over so we never forget, “I LOVE YOU”, “I LOVE YOU”, “I LOVE YOU”.