

THOUGHTS FROM THE KITCHEN

Be the first to love



Photo: Liliyana Vynogradova/shutterstock

As the nights are drawing in and the leaves are starting to fall I find myself reflecting on the events of this year and looking forward to Christmas. One of the highlights so far has been reconnecting with the ‘Word of Life’

Jane Imrie shares her mother’s recipe for shortbread.

meetings in my hometown. The Italian word focolare means ‘hearth’ or ‘fireplace’ and reminds me of my childhood. Growing up in Scotland, we often sat round our hearth as a family (in the

days before TV and central heating!) and those images of dialogue and unity are also powerful themes of the Focolare.

This summer we travelled to northern Italy to visit my son and his family, helping them with some DIY projects in their new house. To begin with, all was fine as I did the cooking for everyone and the building and painting progressed well in the beautiful, sunny

rural surroundings. However, as is so often the case, a historical family disagreement re-surfaced and despite my efforts to love everyone and continue to help, the atmosphere deteriorated and became tense and unpleasant. So much so that it seemed the best part of the trip was eating a meal at Venice airport while waiting for the flight home!

On our return I felt very upset, hurt and disappointed about the whole affair and was really struggling to find a way forward. Thinking about it, I felt that I could have done more to follow in the way of Jesus, and remembering the words ‘Be the first to love!’ I resolved to set out to make amends. Full of hope I sent a message to my son in Italy and happily received a lovely one back.

Although the situation isn’t completely resolved, I feel as if a huge burden has been removed from my shoulders and I can now see a way ahead. The fellowship of our Word of Life meetings has helped me to hand over my problems to God and listen for his answers. ‘Help!’ is a prayer! Life takes us on many journeys and if we realise we have taken a wrong turn, we can always change course and start again to love in a new way, thus heading in the right direction again.

This experience, though heart-breaking at the time, has taught me a lot and brought me closer to God. Christmas, this year, will have a very special meaning for our family.

I would like to share my mother’s shortbread recipe. You can’t beat it and it makes a lovely gift too! 🍪

Shortbread

Ingredients:

- ▶ 150g (5oz) plain flour
- ▶ 25g (1oz) rice flour/ground rice
- ▶ 100g (4oz) butter, refrigerated
- ▶ 50g (2oz) caster sugar

Method

Sift the flour into a bowl. Cut the butter into small pieces and rub into the flour. Stir in the caster sugar and combine to form a ball. Press into the well-greased tin (20cm round, shallow tin) with your fingers. Draw a pattern round the edge with a fork. Cut the mixture into 8 equal pieces. Bake for 30 mins @ 150°C. Take care not to burn!