

Pie or Die!

It comes as no surprise to me that there are 41 effusive quotes about “pie” on the book-lover’s website, Goodreads.com. I might have expected 141, or even 1,041, as there are just so many ways to rhapsodize about pie! Can you tell I love pie? Indeed, I do. I agree with playwright David Mamet, who suggests, “We must have pie. Stress cannot exist in the presence of pie.”

Mine is a long, deliriously delicious relationship with pie. The Walnut Raisin pies made by my neighbor Barbie Quinter’s grandmother when I was four and living in the countryside; my grandmother’s luscious Coconut Cream; my mother’s famous and laborious Scintillating Lemon, my own Strawberry Rhubarb (“Rue-bob” as the Maine lady who gifted me the heirloom recipe pronounced it), decades of Vermont Apple Pies bought at small town fairs, and my daughter Michaela’s amazing Oregon Peach Crumble sensation.

On a recent visit to Portland, OR, my daughter and I stumbled on a Pie Bar and I thought I might faint. Swooning ensued. What would make the prospect of pie so appealing that an entire establishment could thrive on it? In my view, the reason resides in the simple symbolism of pie - it symbolizes home, it speaks of sharing in a community circle made up of the flaky, the tart and the sweet; pie is wholesome and a little indulgent at the same time, it tastes like happiness.

One year, the church I was serving held a Pie Fest on Commitment Sunday. We indulged in a veritable mountain of pies, and each of these tasty oven treasures had the imprint of love for our congregation and the world beyond it baked right in. Hundreds came to enjoy a *scrid* (a small slice, New England style) or savor a great big wedge of joy. And we asked them to consider how they might pledge their time, talent and treasury as their portion of the church’s pie, too.

Afterwards, we ended up sharing poet Shel Silverstein’s Pie Problem. He laments, “If I eat one more piece of pie, I’ll die! If I can’t have one more piece of pie, I’ll die. So, since, it’s all decided, I must die; I might as well have one more piece of pie. MMM-OOOH-MY! Chomp, Bye!” There are worse ways to go.