

Religion

Wedding customs cause chaos

By JIM RYAN
Sixth Sunday of Easter
John 15:9-17
May 5, 1991



Religion and Reality
by Jim Ryan

A Love Story
My cousin is getting married in a month.

He called me a week ago to ask if I'd propose a toast to his mother and father at the reception.

Sounds easy right?

Wrong.

Driving through the wedding customs of today is about as difficult as steering your craft through the clashing rocks of Scylla and Charybdis.

These wedding customs, seemingly ageless, though actually less than a hundred years old, are out of touch with the reality of today's marriages.

How do you toast a mother and father when they've been separated for several years? And, as you probably know, separations aren't always amicable. Sometimes they border on the psychotic.

My cousin's mother, my aunt, called me yesterday to try to sort out the matter. Her solution: to abandon the tradition.

"Toast your cousin; talk about

him. Don't mention us. It's too embarrassing. No, more than that, it's just too painful. I don't want people looking at me, gauging my reactions."

Since I can't toast my cousin's Mom and Dad in public at the wedding, I'll do it here in the privacy of this column.

This is a love story. (This kind of love is called storge by the Greeks - parent-child love.)

Unconventional Love

This is not your conventional love story.

My cousin was adopted. He had been in several foster homes. He'd been abused; there were cigarette burns on his body; dirt was caked in the folds of his

wrists and legs; he screamed constantly; and banged his head against the wall.

He wasn't a lovable child.

He still bears some of the scars of that past; his hands break out in painful eczema, and he sometimes thinks he's.... But he's come a long way.

And it's because of his Mom and Dad. It's as simple as that.

They loved him. It wasn't easy. (I am their witness. I lived with them for over ten years when my cousin was growing up.) But they learned to do it.

My aunt tells this story. My cousin had only been with them a year. My aunt had tried very hard, but he'd rejected her again and again. He still screamed, he still banged his head on the wall. He wasn't a conventional, lovable child.

The breaking point came for her when she realized that she hated him. It happened in the bathroom, her epiphany. She looked in the mirror and saw the truth.

She'd tried so hard; had been rejected by this three year old so often, that she hated him.

That was the point of crisis. It was also the watershed; the point of resolution.

Don't ask me how it happened. I don't know. But from that moment of honesty and revelation she and my cousin moved into a relationship based on love.

Meaning?

My aunt was now moved out of the conventional role of motherhood. She stopped being the conventional mother caring for the conventional child, and became herself, loving her child.

One of our customs, whether in parental or marital love, is to idealize love. We make it too tidy, too clean and neat.

How can it be like that? We know that our lives aren't like that. Aren't our lives messy and untidy?

My aunt learned about love through her adopted son. She also learned a lot about herself.

We should do as well.

This is my toast to my aunt and uncle.

The Good News?

Love must be enflashed. It doesn't exist in the air or in space. It takes on flesh. And according to John, anyone who claims to love God had better struggle to love their neighbor.

Art reflecting reality

By REV. FRITZ SCHMITT
Immanuel Lutheran Church,
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An interesting coincidence of art reflecting reality occurred in the last few weeks. On the same day this newspaper reported the police raid on the "Adults Only Video" store there was an interesting episode of "Night Court" on TV. This episode seemed to reflect well my own feelings about how to respond to filth, obscenity at any level, and entertainment that is more degrading than anything else.

The episode centered around a comic, noted for being crude, insulting, and degrading toward women and minorities, being charged with obscenity. While posing some interesting twists as to who should defend this man and who would prosecute him it was more interesting as to the method Judge Harry Stone used to deal with the issue. His desire was not to prosecute because that could be used by this sick comic as publicity which would increase his following. Yet the judge also wanted to convey the idea that this man and his material was not to be tolerated.

Through a specially arranged performance the true nature of this brand of comedy was brought into the light, both literally and figuratively. Almost all of the characters thus realized that it appealed to the worst parts of our nature. It would be very nice to expose the whole range of pornography, erotica, and even some of the more accepted material being shown on TV in a similar way.

Regardless of how permissive our courts or public censors have become, all of the material found at "Adults Only Video," and a lot of what can be found at any other video store in town should draw the same response from us, the consumer. Rather than label it in a way to make it seem somewhat

okay we should realize that this type of "art" only degrades, insults, and pollutes a precious gift from God.

Most of us appear to be very worried about pollution of our physical environment, but pay no attention to how we have polluted our moral environment, or allowed others to do so. But where does the clean-up begin, and how? It has been the desire of the clergy not to raise a storm of protest over this issue, since that would generate more sales for this undesirable business. Much better would be that those who have been patrons of this material realize how much better their lives would be without it.

That is, the clergy of Georgetown would like to see this video store, and the material like it in other stores, disappear because of lack of interest. But we also know that such will not happen unless the people have a change of heart, or those who have had a change of heart influence others. Turn on the lights and see how foul this really is, and dispose of it properly.

"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God." John 3:19-20.

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