

Holy Union Homily
(May 5, 2012)

What a blessed and wondrous occasion – a public witness of vowed love. And from two people who have weathered storms that most of us in this church cannot even imagine. The opportunity to be with couples as they proclaim their sacramental love for one another is a joy that never grows old. Such dedicated and committed love is truly the taproot of all sacramental life, born in the Garden of Eden, when our relational God realized that the creature lovingly molded from the dust of the earth and animated with the dust of the stars could not ever grow into the fullness of life without a relational connection to others created from the same DNA strands. Love is the answer to every question of substance. Love manifests God incarnate in our world.

Some 20 years ago, as director of the RCIA program in my parish, I was surprised to discover that the musical genius who played piano for our liturgies was not a Catholic, but wanted to become one. That was when I began to know R. It would be another seven years before R and T met, and nine years after that before I, and most of us here, met T. It took us very little time to fall in love with him. And he, in turn, seemed to love all of us. But he was especially solicitous of R ... worried about R ... prayed for R ... cherished R.

The very first time T came to Therese, he said to me after the Mass, “R and me are really good friends for a long time. R loves me, you know. I saved R’s life once.” Oh yes, it was obvious that R loved T. And, musical genius that he is, he is quite eloquent in speaking of that love. Recently, in talking about something particularly endearing about T, R said to me, “I felt like I had swallowed the sun!”

Bottom line: they have been friends for over 13 years of ups and downs, including very serious physical and psychological and emotional problems in both their lives ... and, whether figuratively or literally, saving one another’s lives along the way ... or, as they put it, “being there from heart to hip.” Great analogy, from heart to hip ... joined intimately ... becoming one.

What was the attraction? we might ask. They are so different! we might say. T a sports fanatic, R a classical romanticist. ... for an overtly obvious one. We tend to forget, after moving beyond that first blush of falling in love, that opposites attract. And we tend to ignore the wisdom of God in that. People are attracted to what they aren’t in order to be more complete. They want to fill in the missing pieces of their lives. It’s relational. It’s in their DNA.

We’re all slogging toward Eden.

R and T, you have endured so much, and always been there for one another. You have allowed yourselves the time and the space to grow into this particular love, love forged in fires of hell-on-earth that continue, even today, as you publicly share your joy while also experiencing deep down hurt because your family members are not here and do

not celebrate with you. You know that falling in love is exquisite ecstasy, but you also know that staying in love is a decision which is sometimes excruciating agony. You know how to make it work. You know God suffers with you and you know God celebrates with you.

Know this also: everyone who is here today loves you, honors your commitment to love one another, and willingly stands as witness to the vows you are about to make.

And what a special wedding gift God gives you today: a radiant super-moon to rise in tandem with the setting of the fiery sun ... the coming together of the yin and the yang ... the opportunity to glow without and within ... the Soul of the night, the Spirit of the day ... heart to hip.

And God's commandment is this: love one another.

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