



### ALL IN THE FAMILY Sarah Child

Some people yearn for their very own swimming pool. I, perverse creature that I am, want no part of one. Rather my dreams center around a swimmin' hole.

Given my druthers I would rather frolic in a swimming hole than in the ocean, a lake, pond or super-luxurious, kidney-shaped concrete job.

That is because in all my years of growing up I seldom swam in anything else, any of the above being in scarce quantity in the Pennsylvania hills.

The first time I ever swam in a pool I scraped myself on the rough concrete side, polluted my lungs and stung my eyes on the chlorine saturated water.

I don't like the taste of the ocean nor the feel and most of the lake shores I've ever visited have been over-inhabited.

There is nothing too much wrong with ponds other than I learned how to swim letting a current push me along as I labored with an awkward dog paddle. Any other kind of water always seems to be stagnant.

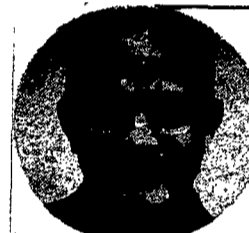
The charms of swimming in a hole carved out naturally by an everflowing stream or "crick" are

many. It is a combination of things. If you get a mouthful of water — it's only a fresh spring water. Minnows nibbling on your toes and the exquisite pleasure of sliding down a mud bank on your backside into the water are part of it. Finding an overhanging branch strong enough to support you as you swing out over the water and drop are more of it.

Between my 10th and 14th years I spent most of my summers at a spot we called "Fishin' Crick." We walked two miles of dusty country roads and fields to get there and two miles back. Usually we went twice a day.

There were no lifeguards. The strongest, biggest boys were to whom we looked. No matter how much horse-play they engaged in, should a little one learning to swim start to falter the natural structure of authority soon surfaced and the ablest, fleetest swimmers would go to the rescue.

In August, the water would be low and everybody would warn about "Dog Days" until a heavy rainfall would fill the stream and draw us all back. I think I shall hear the shriek of voices and wild splashing and see the sun shining through the overhanging trees on the water for the rest of my life.



### WORD FOR SUNDAY Fr. Albert Shamon

**Sunday Readings:** (R1) Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48. (R2) 1 Jn. 4:7-10. (R3) Jn. 15:9-17.

The theme of Sunday's readings ("Love one another as I have loved you") presents a certain difficulty. I am sure anyone reading this column can say, "I've heard this all before." Yes, but do we understand it? I think it takes a lifetime to understand Christian love.

Contrast, if you will, the way God loves and the way we love.

God's love is creative. A modern song asks the question: "Do I love you because you are beautiful; or are you beautiful because I love you?"

God loves and makes a person beautiful and good. Addressing God, St. Augustine said, "You have loved me and made me lovable." God did not stumble across us, find us attractive, and then fall in love with us. Not on your life! St. Irenaeus said, "God created man in order to have someone on whom to lavish His love."

Our love, on the contrary, is generally possessive. We love what is good and seek to possess it. Hence our love is partial. We tend to love only those who love us. We draw a circle around ourselves and leave some out.

But "God shows no partiality." His love is expansive: it encircles all men. "The circumcised believers... were surprised that the gift of the Holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles" (R1).

We generally need someone attractive to draw love out of us. But what if someone is not attractive? It is precisely here where Christianity has made a decisive contribution.

The New Testament had to find a special word to make perfectly clear what Christian love truly is. The Greek language has four words for love: *storge*, the love of parents for children and children for parents; *phileo*, the love of friend for friend; and *eros*, sexual love. These three words involve our emotions. They express an experience that comes unsought. We cannot help loving kith and kin or falling in love. These loves

are not a kind of achievement; they just seem to happen. And because they happen, almost unbidden, there seldom is much virtue in falling in love or in loving those who love us.

However, there is a fourth word in Greek for love: it is *agape*. *Agape* has to do with the mind. It is not just an emotion that arises unbidden in our hearts. Rather it is something we will! It is a conquest, a victory, an achievement. No one naturally loves his enemies. To love one's enemies is a conquest of our natural inclinations and emotions.

*Agape* means the will-power to love people whom we do not like. Christ commanded us to love as He loves — to love the unlovable.

*Agape* says, "No matter what a man does to me, I will never seek to harm him. I will never set out for revenge. I will instead seek only his highest good." Christian love, or *agape*, consequently is not an emotion. It is a deliberate conviction of mind issuing in a deliberate policy for life. It takes all of a man to love like that — not only his heart, but his mind and will as well.

Some years ago a clinic for disturbed children was set up. Its aim was "to love these children back to emotional health again." *Agape*, or Christian love, does not presuppose attractiveness in those we love. It sets out to love and thereby to create attractiveness.

The sad fact of human existence is that the unloved are often the unlovable, the unattractive. Father Flanagan, the founder of Boystown, said, "There is no such thing as a bad boy — only an unloved one." Delinquent children, and also delinquent adults for that matter, are often the product of lovelessness on the part of others. Thus the tragic circle is closed: unlovable because unloved; unloved because unlovable. Only Christian love, *agape*, can break the vicious circle — to love the unlovable just because God does, "Love one another as I have loved you."



### Cosi Fan Tutte

Opera Theatre of Rochester will present Mozart's comedy, *Cosi Fan Tutte*, with the Rochester Philharmonic orchestra at 8:15 p.m. Thursday, May 31, in the Eastman Theatre. The supporting cast includes Sister Barbara Starapoli of Nazareth College, shown at the piano; Steve Skura of Holy Redeemer parish, Mary Beth Rieley of Nazareth, Richard Hommel and James Perry, a member of St. Vincent de Paul

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