



## I'm Yours

On a beautiful late evening in June, our doorbell rang. My teenage son answered and there was nobody there. When he stepped outside to check on this phenomenon, he found a little black kitten struggling out of an Easter basket to which this note was attached: "Dear Currans, I'm yours. I need a good home and I know you will take good care of me. Love, Your Kitty."

"Okay," I said to my three, ages 18, 15, and 11, who were exclaiming with delight at this furry bonanza. "Whose is it?"

"I have no idea."

"Never saw it before."

"What makes you think we know anything about it?"

I scanned their faces and wondered how any parent could question such beatific innocence. Just then I'm Yours started up the draperies, claw by claw, and my innocence took flight.

As remarkable as this attempted addition's appearance was in our family, even more astounding was the similarity in response from the three when I explained why we weren't adopting a cat. One would have thought they rehearsed their responses, if one weren't convinced, that is, of their beatific innocence.

**Dolores Curran**

*Talks With Parents*



"We're not having a cat when two of the three of you already get allergy shots," said my spouse.

"But Steve doesn't have allergies and he shouldn't suffer because of ours," said Honor Graduate. Jim let it pass as too trivial to discuss but I heard the same response from Steve the next day.

"Why should I suffer," he sniffed plaintively, "when I don't have allergies?"

"Maybe you'll luck out and get them," I consoled him, feeling none too friendly over the fact that he had just fed the kitten half a package of wafer thin corned beef which sells for 89 cents for three ounces. (Later, nobody would finish the package because it was cat food.)

I explained patiently, "I've finally got my family launched. I'm not going to be tied down by a kitten."

All three responded with the same side-splitting answer, "It will keep you company while we're gone."

"Keep me company!" I screeched as I peeled I'm Yours off the screen door. "I've spent years waiting for the day when nobody keeps me company." I ignored their stricken faces. "I don't want company. I don't want noise, cat fur, spots, or animals slipping into the refrigerator when I'm getting a carrot stick. I want my home all to myself from 8 to 3."

Stunned silence. Then an agonized whisper. "You don't like having us here?" It was Phase Two: pity for the unwanted.

"Not between 8 and 3," I repeated firmly. A quick shrug of defeat passed between them.

The kitten whined all day as I was trying to write. In late afternoon I found evidence of its activity in my newly planted garden. As I left to get groceries, I also left a note, "See that the cat is gone by bedtime."

Resigned, they called I'm Yours' daddy, a classmate, who came to retrieve it. I suspect he had a list of others who were going to get late evening surprises.

In the days that followed, our three went into mourning. We heard plaintive references to "our kitty," parental hardness of heart, and the unfair distribution of voting power in the family.

Whatever happened to, "It followed me home."

## Where Do They Put It ALL?

I don't know who fostered the notion that only girls giggle. On a recent Sunday morning I awakened at about 6 a.m. to the tintinnabulation of tee-hees floating up from the family room below. Two sets were still in the tenor range, a third kept cracking between the highs and lows and a fourth was definitely on its way to being basso profundo.

The host, our 12-year-old son, had decreed that everybody go to 5 p.m. Mass the night before so they could all sleep in on Sunday morning. As I climbed wearily into my clothes I calculated that the only thing they would have missed thus far was the Sunrise Service.

The maneuvering for this affair had been conducted with expertise. Just 20 of his closest classmates for a boy-girl picnic in the back to celebrate the end of the school year OR a sleepover for a few of his pals. The sleepover won hands down.

His father when he heard of the plans asked with more than a trace of irony if this was a reward for distinguishing himself during the school year. Well, it was pointed out, he'd not been suspended, barred, or cancelled for the coming year. That was some kind of accomplishment wasn't it?

**Sarah Child**

*All in the Family*



The get-together began about 8:30 with a hot dog roast scheduled for about 9 p.m. By 9, however, they had already consumed a six pack of Orange Crush, two bags of pretzels, a bag of Tootsie Rolls, a box of Bacon Thins, a few Triskets, and some potato chips. They said maybe they'd pass on the hot dogs for the time being.

Two were intimidated by the dog who has a fearsome bark. They barricaded her in the kitchen but her pleading whine to be let in on the fun worked after about 15 minutes and when I went down about 1 a.m. to turn off the TV and lights Clem was curled up in the middle of tangled sleeping bags and inert bodies.

At 6:30 I put out a plate of cinnamon sugar-glazed and cream filled donuts. At 6:33 the dozen cakes had disappeared and somebody was suggesting they go outside for a quick game of soccer.

"No!" I screeched quickly, pointing out that some of the neighbors liked to sleep until at least 7 a.m. on weekends. "Try the TV," I suggested.

"Nah, only Rex Humbarg (sic) is on this early," reported one stalwart as a small fray began during which everybody punched everybody else out amidst more giggles. The dog got so excited she tore out through the screen then bounded back into the middle of it all, nipping at sleeping bags and barking ecstatically.

At 9 I put a plate of still hot blueberry muffins on the table. "We're still stuffed," somebody said. I went upstairs, returned and discovered a new round of dirty glasses and a pile of empty muffin papers.

At 10 a.m. they thanked me kindly, gathered up their sleeping bags and departed, going home, no doubt, to see what there was to eat.

## A Spiritual Journey Home

Bob and Judy became husband and wife 13 years ago, with Judy entering the Catholic Church around the time of their marriage.

Two children came forth from this union who were immediately baptized according to the basically pre-Vatican II ritual.

A house move, the common priorities of couples their age and unsatisfactory experiences with parish structures led them to drift away from regular worship. Bob generally stopped going to Mass; Judy returned occasionally to her former church; the children received little religious training.

Through these years, however, the family bond remained tight and loving. It was that close union which finally brought about a spiritual conversion and a remarkable journey back to the Lord.

Realizing their daughter and son, ages 12 and 9, were religiously confused and impoverished, they both knew something had to be done and this step would have to be taken as a family.

Through a fascinating series of providential circumstances, they came in contact with the priest who witnessed their vows and received Judy into the Church. In a painful three-hour visit with him, they

**Fr. Joseph M. Champlin**

*Our Church Family*



described their aimless wanderings, their hurts, their anxious desire to discover inner peace, but their confusion as to where or how.

He suggested the family go to Mass together, judge if they feel comfortable and see in what way the Lord leads them.

The next Sunday they were there, ten minutes early, and the next and the next.

But there was more to come.

The children began receiving individual instruction from a Catholic neighbor in preparation for first Eucharist and penance.

Bob and Judy shared the scriptural readings during that Mass. The father read St. Paul's account in Corinthians of the Last Supper. When, at words "Do this in memory of me," he looked intently, strongly, lovingly at his young son, it seemed he wanted so to impress this message on the boy's heart that little Robbie might be spared in the future the

dark years of a spiritual desert his parents had known.

This couple has become deeply involved in parish activities. Moreover, the return to a richer, patterned life of prayer and worship has expanded their hearts and prompted them to reach out toward others in need.

Every few months Judy carries a tiny baby to Sunday liturgy, not her own, but another mother's. As foster parents, they take the infant into their warm, secure dwelling for a few weeks until the adopting parents are found and come for the child.

Leo, a 74-year-old widowed uncle of Bob's recovering in the hospital from major surgery, felt greatly depressed over his condition and future. "Where will I go? Who will care for me? How will I end up?"

Bob and Judy sensed his need and simply said: "Come and stay with us until you are able to return home and live on your own."

Uncle Leo broke down and wept for joy when they made that generous offer. This couple who has regained such peace as they returned home to the Father now were bringing similar happiness to a lost person by opening their house and hearts to him.

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