

# Comedy falls a bit short; melodrama disturbs

By Gerri Pare  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — The honeymoon is over when a groom discovers an old man has switched personalities with his beautiful bride in *Prelude to a Kiss* (20th Century Fox).

Madly in love, Peter and Rita (Alec Baldwin and Meg Ryan) decide to marry after a whirlwind six-week romance. An odd thing happens at the wedding reception: an elderly stranger (Sydney Walker) stumbles in and kisses the bride, leaving them both dazed for the moment.

By honeymoon's end, Peter is sure Rita is just not herself — literally. The old man confesses that somehow his and Rita's "souls" were switched when they kissed and now it's up to Peter to undo the damage. Meanwhile, Rita has gone back to her parents so Peter takes in the old man who really is his wife under all the wrinkles.

Director Norman Rene takes his Broadway play to the big screen, turning in a featherweight fantasy to appeal to those with a romantic streak.

Although their relationship is never given any depth beyond their flush of first love, Peter and Rita make a handsome couple. Perhaps the movie is too busy trying to be a romantic comedy to do justice to more substantial themes like affirming the transcending power of love to see past appearances. In any event it is an airy summer mo-



Alec Baldwin (left) is Peter, Meg Ryan is Rita and Sydney Walker is Julius in *Prelude to a Kiss*, a fable about love.

vie whose thin but uncommon plot may keep undemanding audiences intrigued.

Due to an implied premarital relationship, the USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

## One False Move

Two murderers fleeing a Los Angeles killing spree with a female accomplice meet their destiny in a sleepy Southern town in *One False Move* (IRS).

In the violent opening, white hoodlum Ray (Billy Bob Thornton) and his black partner, Pluto (Michael Beach), brutally dispatch six people, making off with drugs and money.

On the run with them is Ray's mulatto girlfriend, Fantasia (Cynda Williams), as they head for Houston to sell the drugs. En route, Fantasia panics and kills a state trooper when he pulls over the interracial trio. Their identities are known and the cops suspect they will head for Fantasia's hometown in Star City, Ark.

Awaiting their arrival is Sheriff

Dixon (Bill Paxton), who wants to be a hero cop almost as much as he needs to keep his past relationship with Fantasia a secret. The arrival of two detectives (Jim Metzler and Earl Billings) from L.A. only strengthens his resolve to go it alone in capturing the killers — and possibly freeing Fantasia.

A chilling sense of dread permeates director Carl Franklin's harrowing contemporary melodrama.

Except for the thoroughly evil Ray and Pluto, the characters are complex and the dialogue — especially regarding race relations — thought-provoking.

While the violence is graphic, it underscores the ugly consequences of crime and drug abuse as it spreads from urban centers to peaceful hamlets, destroying human life with impunity.

This is a well-acted, tightly constructed and troubling story that is grimly realistic in its depiction of hardened psychopaths who don't ultimately profit from their crimes. Though you may need a strong stomach, it's a compelling study of characters on both sides of the law.

Because of intermittent graphic violence, occasional drug abuse and some rough language, the USCC classification is A-IV — adults, with reservations. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

# Book should prove helpful for builders of domestic church

*Bringing Christ's Presence into Your Home*, by Keith A. Fournier; Thomas Nelson Publishers (Nashville, Tenn., 1992); 227 pages; \$9.95.

By Monsignor William H. Shannon  
Guest contributor

*Bringing Christ's Presence into Your Home* could be described as a spiritual handbook for building a truly Christian family life.

The author is an attorney and refers to himself as an evangelical Roman Catholic — a term which, I believe, is intended to show his deep devotion to Scripture. This is clearly evident in his writing.

The book develops a traditional understanding of family that can be traced back to the early church. The earliest Christians gathered to celebrate liturgy in their homes.

When congregations became too large for an ordinary house to accom-

modate them and larger buildings were used for liturgy, the notion of the family — father, mother and children — as the "home-church," where the Gospel was lived, taught and shared, persisted as an important element of Christian tradition.

This book will prove a helpful guide for parents who wish to communicate the Gospel's values to their children. It sees parents as the pastors of the domestic church, pastoring and caring for their families.

The book's first third offers a Christian vision of family life together with a discussion of the Holy Spirit's enabling power as the source of family growth and unity. The remainder of the book is devoted to practical ways of making that vision a reality.

The author discusses real-life, everyday issues families have to face: dealing with emotions of joy, sorrow and love; communicating Christian

values to children in the concrete situations of their lives, yet giving them space to grow and even to make mistakes; praying together as a family and playing together; finding God's presence in the grace of the moment; appreciating the sacraments' importance in the growth of the domestic church; and learning to be in the world without necessarily being like the world.

All these and many more issues are presented in a realistic, honest and Christian way. The author draws many of his illustrations from his own family life. This autobiographical character gives a special concreteness and particularity to what he writes.

Generous use is also made of the Holy Scriptures and Pope John Paul II's writings on family life. The Holy Father's words are often used to strengthen what the author writes. Thus in stressing the importance of seeing our lives as a totality, he uses

the following quote from the pope:

"There cannot be two parallel lives in existence: on the one hand, the so-called 'spiritual' life with its values and demands; and on the other the so-called 'secular' life, that is life in a family, at work, in social relationships, in the responsibilities of public life and in culture ... This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the most serious errors of our age."

Here is a book talking about family life in a style that is down-to-earth and at the same time deeply Christian. Parents and children will be able to find in it valuable insights and much practical wisdom, as they strive — often against many odds — to build the domestic church.

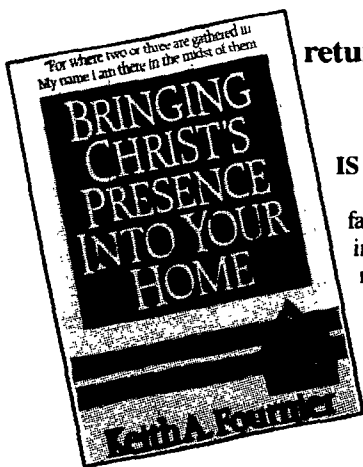
Monsignor Shannon is professor emeritus at Nazareth College of Rochester.

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