

COLUMNISTS

Putting heaven into marriages

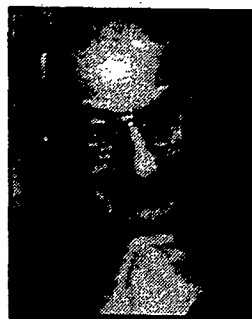
Sunday's Readings: (R3) Luke 20:27-38. (R1) 2 Mc 7: 1-2, 9-14. (R2) 2 Thess 2:16-3:5.

The Sadducees did not even believe in resurrection, yet they posed a question to Jesus about a woman who had married seven brothers and was widowed by each. Whose wife, they asked, will she be in the resurrection? They were trying to trip Jesus up. Jesus answered there is no marriage in heaven, for there is no death in heaven. I think a good question would be, "How we can put heaven into marriages on earth?"

First of all, a successful marriage is a full-time maintenance job. Every house owner must realize how much one must do to keep a house from falling down. A house will crumble if you let it. Put off for a few months a one-hour repair job on the gutters and you'll find yourself with a weekend of work to replace the rotted boards. The longer you postpone maintenance, the faster the rate of deterioration.

We might say the same is true of marriages. Generally, they do not suffer from major malfunctions in the beginning, but merely from a series of small deteriorations that a little adjusting would have corrected. But people lose interest and turn to other things. The destruction accelerates and the marriage is in a shambles.

A successful marriage is not some-



a word for sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

thing that happens of its own accord. Marriage is something that must be worked on constantly. It is an adventure, a game, a growing delight; but it is hard work requiring constant maintenance.

Secondly, a successful marriage requires mutual sharing. Marriage consists of two persons. If there is to be a genuine relationship, there must be communication; communication leads to communion; communion, to union. Husbands often miss the opportunity to add to their marriage right at this point.

A couple came to me one day, and the wife said she was going to get a divorce. I asked, "Why?" She said, "He doesn't love me."

The husband protested and said, "I do love her, Father."

I asked, "Do you ever tell her?"

"Well, no, Father, but she ought to know it. I work all week, put a roof over our heads, food on the table, give her

my paycheck."

Well, he was just being common sense, wasn't he? That's what most men think. Love needs to be expressed. Women need this kind of reassurance and often men do.

A sociologist claims that couples chat with each other for 70 minutes a day in their first year of marriage, dropping to 30 minutes a day in their second year and then to only 15 minutes in the fourth. By the eighth year a husband and wife share hardly any small talk and become nearly silent with each other. That's deadly. Besides maintenance, there must be mutual sharing.

Thirdly, there must be mutual respect and admiration. Compliments, like diamonds, are so precious because they are so rare. A husband should compliment his wife every day. A wife must stand behind her husband in every way. Behind every great man is a greater woman. Lee Iacocca in his autobiography said, "All through my career at Ford and Chrysler, my wife, Mary, was my greatest fan and cheerleader. We were very close, and she was always at my side."

Marriages require something else: a lifelong commitment. When Thomas Hardy died, his heart was removed from his body. His body was buried with honors in Westminster Abbey, but his heart rests next to his wife, beneath his parish churchyard.

So many marriages are coming apart, because there is no determination that there is another alternative. A diamond is two pieces of carbon that stuck together, under terrific pressure, for a long time.

Finally, besides common sense, successful marriages need God. The sacramental grace of every Mass is love. Every Mass makes one a little bit more of a loving person. Monthly confession helps overcome our weaknesses. These two sacraments are the final ingredients of a successful marriage. They put heaven into marriage.

Daily Readings

Monday, Nov. 13

Wis 1:1-7; Lk 17:1-6

Tuesday, Nov. 14

Wis 2:23-3:9; Lk 17:7-10

Wednesday, Nov. 15

Wis 6:1-11; Lk 17:11-19

Thursday, Nov. 16

Wis 7:22-8:1; Lk 17:20-25

Friday, Nov. 17

Wis 13:1-9; Lk 17:26-37

Saturday, Nov. 18

Wis 18:14-16; 19:6-9; Lk 18:1-8

Know a good prayer for your job?

"Do you know a good prayer for a group of editors?" a friend of mine recently asked.

"Not off hand," was my reply, "but I'll look in a few books I've got."

After a half hour of searching and finding no prayer that relates specifically to editors, this thought struck me: I am an editor. Why should I look for someone else's prayer for editors? Why not write one myself?

So I did.

I started by thinking about the work of editing. Basically, editing entails taking other people's work and trying to make it better. In a way, editors live off the creativity of others. Yet, as most good writers will attest, having a good editor can be one of the keys to an author's success.



faith & work

BY GEORGOY F. AUGUSTINI PIERCE

But there is definitely a tension between authors and editors. No matter how good their relationship, the original work is still the author's, and the editor is still "messing" with it.

Then I thought about God. God is the

original author of everything, yet God has no editor. Or does he?

It is obvious that God did not create everything in its final, ultimate, perfect form right from the beginning. (One need only watch the Chicago Cubs regularly to understand this.)

For whatever reason (and who can know the mind of God?), God has left creation unfinished, incomplete. Even more surprising, God has allowed humans to participate in his ongoing creation. In effect, we are all God's editors!

Once I had this insight, I could write my prayer for editors:

"God, in your divine wisdom you created the universe to be changed, improved, and even transformed by the work of human hands and minds. Help

me to edit the work of others in ways that will bring praise to the authors and pleasure to their audiences. Let me choose the best projects, make the right suggestions, catch the important errors, clarify the critical points. Most of all, give me the grace to do my work with insight and integrity, with competence, compassion, and creativity. Amen."

One main point of this story, I think, is that the best people to write prayers for specific occupations or professions are those who do that work every day. I'd like to challenge my readers to write a prayer for themselves and their colleagues, much as I wrote one for myself and my fellow editors.

If you'd like, send a copy to me at 4848 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60640, and I'll try to share it with others.

Look for our next parenting column in the Nov. 23rd issue

"IF YOU'VE MADE A WILL THERE'S ONE MORE THING TO DO."

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WINNER: Sara Sheedy of Rochester correctly identified Elvis as "The King of Rock 'n' Roll."

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