

My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 14

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July 7, 2021



As I write my story this morning, I feel Jesus urging me along. I can only approach my past with prayer, I can only truly see with my heart.

Although much else occurred spiritually and academically during those days in San Francisco, my life pivoted on my developing relationship with Cindy. After I had made my decision regarding the Blessing, Cindy's life also began to change and she separated from her longtime boyfriend, Sean. In the Spring of 1987, we began to gravitate towards each other. She had more time on her hands and we began to play tennis, go to the De Young Art Museum, or simply grab a coffee in our spare time. There was no sense that we were "dating," but we simply enjoyed our friendship.

One Saturday, after playing tennis, I frankly told her, "I want us to have children together." Cindy, ever practical, said, "Ok, but you have proposed to me properly, properly with a ring." She then informed me that it needed to be a ring that she could "glove over" when working in clinic. A thoughtful moment passed, and she said, "I will go shopping with you, to choose and size the ring." All went according to Cindy's plan, a pattern which has defined our relationship ever since, and one to which I attribute the success of our marriage.



We both agreed that marriage needed to be built on a spiritual foundation. Cindy remained uncomfortable with our movement, so we began to explore the various churches in the area. In an interesting turn of events, Cindy felt most at home in Catholic settings, though she never had been raised in the Catholic Church or in any Christian denomination. By the Fall of 1987, I had started attending UC Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. The chaplain for the Catholic legal club, the St. Thomas More Society, was a Jesuit priest from the University of San Francisco, Fr. Cornelius Buckley. I approached him about providing our spiritual direction and marriage preparation classes. He had a better idea.

Fr. Buckley told us about an Oratorian Priest, Fr. Frank Filice, who might be more appropriate for Cindy and me. Fr. Filice had a PhD in Biology and had been a university professor when his wife

passed away. He then entered the Catholic seminary. He and his wife had raised a large family and thus, he had a real grasp on the serious demands of both faith and family. Fr. Filice then ran the Newman Center at San Francisco State University. It was not lost on me at the time that he shared the name of my spiritual mother, Felice. Later, I would work with his son, Joe Filice, at Cardinal Newman High School and teach several of his grandchildren. The sparkling webs God weaves!



When we introduced ourselves to Fr. Filice and discussed our backgrounds, he insisted as a condition of his working together with us, that we meet with him as a couple once a week until we were married, nearly 10 months later. No parish priest I have ever encountered has been this serious about, or committed to, marriage preparation. As we met, Cindy became increasingly interested in God and her developing life of faith. By Christmas, she had determined to be baptized, a rite she had never experienced with any denomination. Over Easter in 1988, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in San Francisco, with Joachim Baum standing in for my grandfather as the God Parent, Cindy received the sacrament of Baptism. Born in Germany, Joachim, my Unificationist brother, had a Jewish mother and a Catholic father, and as he stood with us I felt a deep resonance with providential history.

As Cindy and I prepared for marriage, inevitably, I communicated a more Principled interpretation of the Catholic faith. Having been raised in a nominally Buddhist home, the insights and emphasis of the Principle felt natural to her. It became increasingly clear to me, that

Unificationism in a sense, was Christianity reborn in the East. Cindy and I read many of the texts that had shaped my own earlier faith, especially works by C. S. Lewis and the Trappist monk, Thomas Merton.

Finally, on June 4, 1988, Fr. Ken Deasy, a cousin from my mother's side of the family, performed the rites of our wedding in Solana Beach, California, at St. James' Catholic Church, in a small ceremony attended mostly by family. Shortly thereafter, Cindy received the sacrament of Confirmation in the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption in San Francisco.

Though confident in the love of our Heavenly Parent, I could not see then how thoroughly He had prepared the path of restoration that lay before us.