

Fireproof Love

In going to see Fireproof, I was thrilled that I could walk through the doors of the AMC movie theater without being asked by Hollywood to check my faith and morals at the door. Thanks to two Christian brothers, I could enjoy a good movie and my faith while sitting in stadium seating. Amen! While I had expected a Christian slant in Fireproof, I had not expected the movie to be saturated in the Christian faith. In fact, the storyline pointed to the Eucharist!

The plot centers around a husband and wife whose marriage is literally falling apart. One of the opening scenes involves a frenzied argument between the two which escalates into a bitterly, mutual demand for divorce. As the story unfolds, it is evident that the husband's immoral and adulterous behavior - addiction to pornography- is the source of their marital disharmony. At first, the same selfishness and audacity that drove his addiction were the same selfishness and audacity that he used to justify the divorce. However, the husband's attitude and heart change when confronted by the cross of Christ. He admits to his sins and learns what true love is, the firm commitment to love no matter what, and learns what love is not: feeling-based and thus conditional. Because love is self-less and he a selfish sinner, he knows he can not hope to heal his marriage and truly love his wife on his own. He must love as Christ loves. However, his new-found faith and resolution to love his wife with a pure, Christ-like love was not immediately rewarded. Countless times he extended the olive branch only to be rejected by her. However, instead of listening to his masculine pride and his own feelings, he looked to Christ and kept reaching out to his estranged wife. The husband continued to give of and forget himself without condition. Eventually, his sacrificial love restored their marriage.

Behind the husband's ability to love stands the Eucharist. Jesus gave, in the most perfect and complete way, himself. He gave his life not just on the cross but continues to offer Himself to us in the Eucharist. Even when we reject Him by not coming to Sunday Mass or by not believing in His Presence when we do come, He continues to offer us Himself on the altar at each and every Mass. Indeed, the Eucharist is the model and source of married love.

The ultimate expression of married love is the one-flesh union between a man and his wife. As Fireproof shows, this union is protected, promoted, and strengthened by sacrifice. Now consider what happens during Holy Communion at Mass. When the believer consumes the Eucharist, he/she takes the body of Christ into his own body, a one-flesh union! Although the union is achieved in a different way than in married love, it is essentially a one-flesh union. And, as the one-flesh union between a husband and wife depends on great sacrifice, so it is with the one-flesh union between Christ and the believer. We can only become one-flesh with Christ because of the Eucharist, and we have the Eucharist only because Christ sacrificed His very life.

How necessary is it then that married couples look to the Eucharist to strengthen and support their union and love for each other? The Eucharist shows and radiates a love that is indeed Fireproof.