

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

March 13, 2012 at 8:19am

Love is the love of being loving

by Michael Leach

Soul Seeing

?Loretta, I love you. Not like they told you love is, and I didn't know this either, but love don't make things nice -- it ruins everything. It breaks your heart. It makes things a mess. We aren't here to make things perfect. The snowflakes are perfect. The stars are perfect. Not us. Not us! We are here to ruin ourselves and to break our hearts and love the wrong people and die. ...

?I'm in love with you.?

-- Ronny (Nicolas Cage) in ?Moonstruck?

?Snap out of it!?

-- Loretta (Cher)

First we fall in love. That's the exciting part. Then we learn to love. That's the hard part. Finally, we simply love being loving. And that, by far, is the best part.



My favorite movie about love is ' Fargo. ' That's the one where

Steve Buscemi gets stuffed into a wood chipper. But it's really about Marge Gunderson (Frances McDormand), a pregnant sheriff, and her husband, Norm (John Carroll Lynch), who gets up to make her a hot breakfast when she's called to a crime scene at 3 a.m. He goes out and warms up her car because it's below zero and snowing. The best scene comes at the end when Marge and Norm are lying in bed and he confesses that his painting of a mallard for a new stamp came in second place.

' Oh, that's terrific, ' Marge says.

' It's just a 3-cent stamp. '

' It's terrific. '

' Hauptman's blue-winged teal got the 29-cent. People don't much use the 3-cent. '

' Oh, for Pete's sake, of course they do. Whenever they raise the postage, people need the little stamps. '

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' Yah? '

' When they're stuck with a bunch of the old ones. '

' Yah, I guess. '

' It's terrific. I'm so proud of you, Norm... Heck, Norm, you know we're doing pretty good. '

Norm caresses Marge's belly. ' I love you, Margie. '

' I love you, Norm. '

' Two more months, ' he says.

' Two more months. '

That's all there is. That's all there needs to be. We don't need the moon to hit our eye like a big pizza pie to know amore. Marge and Norm know that love is not excitement but the steadfast love of being loving.

Actors Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis, married for 56 years, knew about that kind of love. In her autobiography Ruby wrote about the arrangement they made for after their deaths: ' A special urn, large enough and comfortable enough to hold both our ashes. Whoever goes first will wait inside for the other. When we are reunited at last, we want the family to say good-bye and seal the urn forever. Then on the

side, in letters not too bold -- but not too modest either -- we want the following inscription: RUBY AND OSSIE -- IN THIS THING TOGETHER.?

We can begin to love being loving whether we're in love or not, in a relationship or not, right here on the spot where we're standing. We are all Ruby and Ossie. We are all in this thing together. We are all literally ?in Love? (Acts 17: 28), and our purpose in life is to see it and be it no matter our age or state of life. Real love has no beginning, object or end.

Psychiatrist Thomas Hora defines this love for us: ?The love of being loving is the desire to manifest or reflect the goodness of God unconditionally and non-personally.? God is all powerful, all everywhere Love-being-loving. We are not here to ruin ourselves and break our hearts and love the wrong people and die, but to love the way God loves (John 13: 34), without desire for reward or regard for person. We are all Ronny and Loretta and Marge and Norm too: likenesses of Love and in this thing called Love as one, like ashes in an urn.

Falling in love is such fun, and such misery. Learning to love -- snapping out of it -- is so hard. The love of being loving -- being Godlike -- is the best part. And the beautiful part is that we can start that part right now.

[Michael Leach edits Soul Seeing for *NCR*.]

Source URL (retrieved on 08/20/2017 10:57): <https://www.ncronline.org/blog/soul-seeing/love-love-being-loving>
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