

THE NEWLYWEDS

Way to go, Judy Ann and Ryan

by NESTOR TORRE
Inquirer.net

MANILA-Many celebrity weddings are played for all of the gloss and glitter they're worth, with big-bang nuptial rites, multiple sponsors and, literally, a cast of hundreds. To their credit, Ryan Agoncillo and his bride Judy Ann Santos recently "dared" to flout that big-bash and big-deal stereotype, and opted for what may be described as an "anti-celebrity" wedding set, not at the Manila Cathedral, but in the relatively recondite parish church of the bucolic town of San Juan, Batangas.

80 guests

To uphold the solemnity and personal significance of the occasion, the couple did away with a lot of the attendant fuss and bother that weigh stellar nuptials down, starting with the hundreds of VIPs who "have" to be invited to weddings and receptions.

Judy Ann and Ryan pared their list down to only 80, even if it meant earning the ire of "important" people. Now, that took guts.

In addition, Judy Ann made sure her estranged father was present, at the risk of offending her beloved mother. Happily, her mom later assured

everyone she understood her daughter's need to be surrounded by her "complete" family on the important occasion, jokingly adding that she resisted the temptation to trip her former hubby up.

Levity aside, the "conflicted" nature of her parents' relationship may have been one of the reasons that Judy Ann opted to do away with the traditional march down the aisle, deciding instead to walk to the altar by her lonesome.

Another reason may have been that, at 30, she felt she had become her own person, so her solitary walk vivified this confident sense of being.

'Silent' coup

It was similarly heartening to realize that the Agoncillos' "secret" wedding couldn't have been pulled off without the cooperation of all of the people who had been invited to the wedding. In local show biz, it's unheard of that people keep secrets, so the fact that the "silent" coup was pulled off is a tribute to the love that their relatives and friends felt for the engaged couple.

For their part, Judy Ann and Ryan also earned the admiration of many for the creativity and brio with which they pulled it off. Instead of doing things by rote, they added personal touches to the occasion that made it distinctly, feelingly their own.

It's just too bad that some people have been criticizing them for flouting the show biz-y baggage and adumbration that have weighed down so many celebrity weddings. Yes, stars "owe" their public and coworkers a lot, but they owe themselves-and deserve-much more.



No apologies

Before they became stars, they were persons. After their stellar careers ebb and eventually end, they will still be persons-so, they are entitled to uphold their personhood above all other considerations on one of the most significant days of their lives. Thus, they have nothing to apologize for, and it's their onion-skinned and snifty critics who should be abashed.

The Agoncillos' desire to make their wedding rites their own gives us hope, because it indicates that we have some stars who don't allow their stardom to control and stifle them. ■



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