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Marriage: Passion, Friendship & Vocation

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THE SAINT PAUL SEMINARY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

Marriage: Passion, Friendship & Vocation

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Divinity

Of the University of St. Thomas

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Master of Arts in Theology

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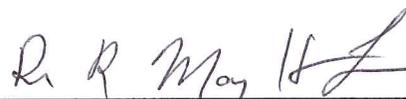
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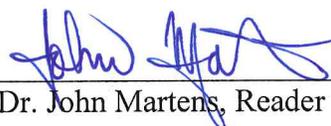
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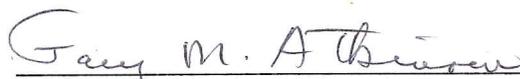
This Thesis by Gabriel M. Walz fulfills the thesis requirement for the master's degree in theology approved by Dr. R. Mary Hayden Lemmons, as Director, and by Dr. John Martens and by Dr. Gary Atkinson as Readers.



Dr. R. Mary Hayden Lemmons, Director



Dr. John Martens, Reader



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Introduction:

***Is friendship necessary for marriage
or does romantic passion suffice?***

Healthy and happy marriages seem to be declining in our days even here in the United States:

Statistics chart the rapid and terminal decomposition of the family in the United States. From 1970 to 1989 the divorce rate rose more than 40%, since 1940 by 250%. In 1960 only 5% of all births were out of wedlock; by 1985 out-of-wedlock births climbed to 22% (a number deflated by the 1.5 million babies murdered in the womb that year by legal abortion). In 1960 more than 80% of married women with children under six devoted themselves exclusively to domestic duties; by 1980 these homemakers were in the minority. In 1977, nearly 80% of America's children lived with both parents. Now, only two-thirds of them do. Of all families with children, nearly 29% are now one-parent families, up from 17% in 1977. Finally, from 1970 to 2004 the annual number of marriages per 1,000 adult women in the United States plunged by nearly 50%.¹

Divorce, out of wedlock births, one parent families, etc.—these statistics indicate that the vocation of marriage is suffering a crisis in the United States. The statistics are staggering. While it can be helpful to look back to the recent past for reasons why this may be occurring locally, an adequate answer to this crisis cannot be given without looking much further back in

¹ G. C. Dilsaver. *The Three Marks of Manhood: How to be Priest, Prophet, and King of Your Family*. (Charlotte, North Carolina: TAN Books, 2010): 2-3; cf. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 1:20, 64; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1988*, 108th ed. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987), 59, 62, 83, 373, 374.

human history to understand how we were made—for what purpose—and what happened in the meantime.

Why and how the problem got started

In the *Garden of Eden*, the first married couple would have experienced perfect spousal friendship and expressed love fully to one another. Man and woman were made in the image and likeness of God—with dignity and equality.² Yet, the fall of mankind into sin has ruptured the relationships between human persons and God, between human persons and one another and even within the person's very self.³ The proper ordering of Man's intellect over the lower appetites—passions and emotions—has given way to an inner chaos.⁴ We no longer do what we ought but sometimes choose things opposed to our true good. We have a tendency to reduce other persons' intrinsic value merely for the sake of attaining some perceived good which—in the end—may even have been much less a good than the good sacrificed to attain it.

In his book, *The World's First Love*, Archbishop Fulton Sheen wrote that:

Behind this rebellion or disobedience [of creatures to] God, there are two basic assumptions. The first is, that the intelligence *invents* or *originates* truth, and that it does not discover or find it. In the nineteenth century it was very common for materialists to believe that they *originated* the laws of nature because they discovered them. They forgot that the scientist is, actually, a proofreader of the book of Nature, and not its author. The second assumption is that subordination to another implies subjection. This implies a denial of all degrees and hierarchy in

² cf. Genesis 1:26-31

³ With particular relevance to this essay, spouses are called upon to imitate the profound love of God. It is not irrelevant that Jesus Christ became Incarnate as a man—it was precisely in doing so that He was able to repair the ruptures of masculinity and femininity caused by Original Sin. As Dr. Lemmons wrote: “Ending male oppression requires Christ to reveal to men, and to women, that the mission of masculinity lies not in egotistical domination but in the continual laying down of one's life for the sake of love” (Lemmons, “Equality, Gender and John Paul II,” 118).

⁴ By virtue of the Fall, the powers of our nature are weakened and we are “subject to ignorance, suffering, and the domination of death; and inclined to sin” (Catholic Church. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000): 418).

nature and in creation, and the reduction of mankind to an egalitarianism, in which each man is a god.⁵

Although these two basic assumptions are first manifested in the sin of Adam and Eve, they continue to be promulgated by every act of disobedience against God throughout human history. The first of these basic assumptions pertains to the attempt on the part of a creature to assume the role of his Creator—to grasp at divinity. The second is the consequence of the disorder that results from having overturned the objective order established by God in creating the world. An unfortunate consequence of this second assumption is that sinners do not easily see that subordination does not automatically entail subjection. In elevating the individual and denying a hierarchy of nature, Man has corrupted the moral order, ironically even subjecting persons to subjection. In particular, the Original Sin described in Genesis affects the spousal relationship such that the husband's tendency will be to dominate his wife while the wife's tendency will be to an unhealthy submission to her husband's lordship over her.⁶

⁵ Fulton J. Sheen. *The World's First Love*. (Garden City, NY: Garden City Books, 1952) 83-84.

⁶ cf. Genesis 3:16; in her essay, "Equality, Gender, and John Paul II" Dr. R. Mary Hayden Lemmons writes of the specific effect that the rupture of sin caused on the spousal relationship as it is addressed in Genesis after Adam and Eve's fall into sin. She writes: "Genesis 3:16 is quite explicit that some penalties of Original Sin are gender-specific, affecting even the spousal union of love: 'Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' In other words, Original Sin left woman with the desire to close her love in upon her husband and make him the lord, while Original Sin left men with the desire to dominate women. Yielding to either desire is the wellspring of all gender sins—even in today's world." R. Mary Hayden Lemmons. "Equality, Gender, and John Paul II." (*Logos* vol. 5 (Summer 2002)): 115. Such confusion about subordination can hinder the fruition of successful and healthy marriages. Acknowledging the reality of sin and its effects on one's own self and on the spousal relationship helps couples to recognize certain unhealthy dispositions that may exist in themselves and deepen their relationship through a deeper integration of truth.

In our own time

The crisis noted earlier in this Introduction indicates that people in our culture who live the vocation of marriage have many trials to face. Those trials cannot be understood in a way that disavows the role of sin in corrupting the human will and desires. Our modern culture is moving away from a fundamentally Christian conception of marriage and there are many negative consequences that follow. Archbishop Sheen wrote:

Since the abandonment of the Christian conception of marriage, both man and woman have forgotten their mission. Purity has become identified with repression, instead of being seen as it really is—the reverence for preserving a mystery of creativeness until God sanctions the use of that power. While man is outgoing in his pleasure, womanly purity keeps hers inward, channeled or even self-possessed, as if a great secret had to be hugged to the heart. There is no conflict between purity and carnal pleasure in blessed unions, for desire, pleasure, and purity each has its place.⁷

Marriage does not restrict authentic love, but facilitates its fruitful expression. It is within the context of marriage that all the experiences of both purity and carnal pleasure can be expressed; for no conflict exists between desire, pleasure and purity when they find expression in married love. The idea that marriage would restrict the expression of authentic love is entirely backwards. Archbishop Sheen's words were, in a sense, prophetic. The book in which his words are written was composed only shortly after some of the earliest (and most hopeful looking) statistics quoted earlier in this Introduction were recorded. If the statistics are to halt their decline, something needs to be done to safeguard the sanctity of marriage and to represent the true nature of love as we have learned it from God Himself.⁸

⁷ Sheen, 135

⁸ Understanding the nature of God's love is helpful for those who are called to imitate that love by extending it to God and one another. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen presents seven "laws" of love corresponding to the seven verbal pronouncements of Mary in the New Testament. These are: (1) love is a choice, (2) choice ends in identification with the beloved, (3) love requires a constant de-egoization, (4) love is inseparable from joy, (5) love is inseparable from sorrow, (6) all love, before it mounts to a higher level, must die to a lower one, and (7) the end of all human love is doing the will of God (Sheen, 137-142).

In this essay, I argue that a specific kind of friendship, spousal friendship, is necessary for marriage. To base the spousal relationship on the experience of romantic passion alone is to attempt to set something that is meant to be *enduring* upon *unstable* foundations. Romantic passion is itself rooted in the emotions—which are fleeting. Relationships that are based solely on romantic passion tend by their nature toward the reduction of the other person to a mere object of one’s use—and this is beneath human dignity. Thus, relationships that rest upon romantic passion alone do not foster the love that is proper to the spousal relationship. For these reasons, the first chapter of this essay will attempt to show that romantic passion alone is insufficient for the spousal relationship.

The second chapter of this essay will argue that spousal friendship is crucial to marriage for two reasons: (1) to prevent the harms mentioned in the discussion of romantic passion, and (2) to foster a healthy context for the growth and fruition of betrothed love. Marriage facilitates spousal friendship—though it does not automatically cause it to be. Spousal friendship facilitates betrothed love and develops into it. Betrothed love is a deeper expression of spousal love than even the spousal friendship itself; yet spousal friendship may be said to be ordered to the expression of betrothed love. In betrothed love, each spouse makes a total self-gift to the other that is characterized by the healthy submission of their ‘I’ in imitation of the radical self-giving that characterizes the love exchanged in the Trinitarian relationship.

The role of friendship with God in sustaining and strengthening the spousal relationship is taken up in the third chapter of this essay. Friendship with God can both precede the entire process of a man and woman’s growth in intimacy and friendship (at least on some level) and deepen through it—though this is not always the case. Since spousal intimacy is itself meant to

be a reflection of divine intimacy, participating in the love of God through friendship with Him is crucial to the deepest forms of intimacy between persons in marriage.

Chapter I:
***Why romantic passion alone
cannot sustain the spousal relationship.***

The present chapter of this essay will explore the nature of romantic passion and why a relationship based upon it alone cannot sustain the spousal relationship. We shall here explore the kinds of attraction, forms of loves and relationships arising from those loves. In the end, however, it should be clear that romantic passion cannot alone sustain the spousal relationship.

Romantic passion focuses attention merely on oneself and how the other meets one's needs

The nature of what I have called “romantic passion” is analyzed by Karol Wojtyla (1920-2005^{AD}; known today as Saint John Paul II) from a phenomenological perspective in his book, *Love and Responsibility*.⁹ “Love...” he writes, “signifies a mutual relationship between two people, a man and a woman, based on a particular attitude to the good.”¹⁰ The *attitude to the*

⁹ Insofar as *Karol Wojtyla* is better known to the world today as Saint John Paul II, I shall henceforth refer to the text's author by this name and not *Karol Wojtyla*. However, the specific footnote citations made in the footnotes of this essay will still list the name *Karol Wojtyla*.

¹⁰ Karol Wojtyla. *Love and Responsibility*. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981) 74.

good upon which this relationship is based is itself born of an *attraction*¹¹ experienced by the persons toward one another wherein each sees the other as ‘a good’ for himself. The ease with which the attraction arises in a man for a woman or a woman for a man (or both) is a consequence of the *sexual urge* operating in the individual experiencing the attraction.¹²

By nature of the sexual urge, men and women are “particularly oriented toward the physiological and psychological qualities of a person of the opposite sex—their body and their masculinity or femininity.”¹³ Thus there are two kinds of attractions: one physical and one emotional. John Paul II calls the physical attraction—to the body of a person of the opposite sex—*sensuality*; whereas, he calls the emotional attraction—to the masculinity or femininity of a person of the opposite sex—*sentimentality*.¹⁴ Attraction of either form is not bad in itself and can be the means through which one person is drawn to another person. Yet, in themselves, these attractions do not constitute authentic love, though they may facilitate its origin and expression.

¹¹ In *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyla writes that attraction entails more than a purely cognitive experience. Apart from the intellection and cognitive components, attraction also includes “the emotions and the will.” Wojtyla, 75. “Attraction involves the senses, the mind, the will, the emotions and desires.” Edward Sri. *Men, Women and the Mystery of Love* (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2007) 32.

¹² Wojtyla, 74

¹³ Sri, 32

¹⁴ Sri, 32

Sensuality and sentimentality

While sensual attraction taken on its own, may be considered “a sort of raw material for true, conjugal love” it cannot, by itself, constitute authentic love since the object that it seeks [by itself] is only the body: “sensuality in itself is quite blind to the person.”¹⁵ This sensual attraction for the body of the other person is “often characterized by a longing to enjoy the body of another person [merely] as an object of pleasure.”¹⁶

Sentimental attraction, like sensual attraction, has an important role to play in authentic love; authentic love ought to involve the integration of emotions.¹⁷ Yet, like sensual attraction, sentimental attraction also presents a possible danger: the enslavement of the individual to his own emotions. Sentimentality tends towards making emotions the “measure for love.”¹⁸ Similar to the blindness of sensuality to the person, sentimentality—which allows one’s feelings to govern his actions—can also blind him to the person. His feelings threaten to blind him to the truth.¹⁹ Blindness to the truth leads to the creation of disingenuous idealizations of the one being loved. In such cases, John Paul II writes:

¹⁵ Wojtyla, 108

¹⁶ Sri, 41

¹⁷ Wojtyla elaborates on what sentimental love between two people can look like: “Sentimental love keeps two people close together, binds them – even if they are physically apart – to move in each other’s orbit. This love embraces memory and imagination, and also communicates itself to the will. It does not arouse the will, but charms and disarms it” (Wojtyla, 110-111). Wojtyla goes on to explain that when people in this state are physically separated, they are mentally together; when they are physically together, they find ways of externally manifesting the internal desires they experience. Expression of such affection is entirely compatible with the experience of authentic and conjugal love.

¹⁸ Sri, 44

¹⁹ Truth is discovered through the exercise of reason *and not through emotion*.

The ideal is more powerful than the real, living human being, and the latter often becomes merely the occasion for an eruption in the subject's emotional consciousness of the values which he or she longs with all his heart to find in another person. It does not matter whether they are really values possessed by the particular person towards whom the subject feels a sentimental love. For that person... is less the *object of* than the *occasion for* affection.²⁰

If a relationship is based upon either sensuality or sentimentality *alone*, the relationship is based upon *self-gratification*. An individual in such a relationship pursues something that is good for *himself* without considering what the genuine good is for the other. A relationship of this sort is one in which the *other person is used* by the individual to attain the end—whether of sensual or sentimental attraction—for which the individual's desire has roused him. It would be a mistake of logic to argue that if both individuals mutually chose to 'use' one another in such a way, then the nature of the relationship would change.

Loves for pleasure and utility

In his book titled *Nicomachean Ethics*, the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that there are three kinds of 'friendship' characterized by three kinds of affection that unite people in relationships: (1) love for the sake of utility; (2) love for the sake of pleasure; (3) love of the other for the other's own sake.²¹ Similar to the two kinds of attractions addressed by John Paul II, these three kinds of 'friendship' are not themselves bad, but the first two (*utility* and *pleasure*) are prone to disintegration when existing by themselves.²² Aristotle argues that such

²⁰ Wojtyła, 112 (emphasis added).

²¹ cf. Aristotle, 1156a

²² The third kind of friendship will be taken up in the next chapter of this essay dealing with "why and how spousal friendship is necessary to prevent disintegration."

relationships are sustained only as long as the experience of *passion* or the *utility* itself (from which those relationships arise) is sustained.²³

Love for the sake of utility

Love for the sake of utility does not require loving the other in himself; this relationship is built rather upon the foundation of some advantage which is gained through it, even if the other's company is unpleasant.²⁴ In such a case, once its usefulness is served and ended, so too is this friendship ended.²⁵ Therefore, this form of relationship only endures so long as the need to which it supplies a response endures. If the relationship between the individuals endures beyond

²³ The first two of these species of friendship are “transient” and the third species of friendship – the friendship of comrades – can incorporate the goods of the first two because it looks beyond them *to the true good of the other*.

Similarly, St. Thomas Aquinas writes that “when friendship is based on usefulness or pleasure, a man does indeed wish his friend some good: and in this respect the character of friendship is preserved. But since he refers this good further to his own pleasure or use, the result is that friendship of the useful or pleasant, in so far as it is connected with love of concupiscence, loses the character of true friendship” (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia IIae Q. 26 A. 4).

²⁴ This form of relationship is most commonly found among older people who “pursue what is advantageous, not what is pleasant, and also among those in their prime or youth who pursue what is expedient” (Aristotle, 1156a).

A practical example of a relationship of utility which alone forms the foundations of a spousal relationship is the husband and wife whose spousal relationship is founded upon their mutual desire for the welfare of their children. Spousal relationships of this kind—founded upon the mutual desire for the welfare of the children—tend toward disintegration sometime after the children have vacated their parents' home. Such relationships may even produce stressful familial environments, since the marital commitment to which the spouses have committed themselves—each to the other—naturally entails a level of intimacy beyond the subjective experience of their own relationship.

²⁵ As Aristotle says, “Those who are friends for utility dissolve the friendship as soon as the advantage is removed; for they were never friends of each other, but of what was expedient for them” (Aristotle, 1157a).

its utility, then the endurance of the relationship must be explained by the formation of some other kind of friendship.²⁶

Friendships of utility are liable to accusation due to the nature of the relationship.²⁷ “For these friends deal with each other in the expectation of gaining benefits. Hence they always require more, thinking they have got less than is fitting; and they reproach the other because they get less than they require and deserve. And those who confer benefits cannot supply as much as the recipients require.”²⁸ In a friendship of utility, one may offer another a gift, as would friends in a friendship of virtue might, but it is a gift given with the expectation of receiving something of equal or greater value in return.²⁹ While most people desire to do “what is fine,” they will end up choosing what is beneficial for themselves in the end.³⁰

In friendships of utility, something is given with the expectation of something to be received. When something is given and nothing is received, a dispute will arise and it may lead to the termination of the relationship. In these relationships, when an inequality is present, “the superior person should get more honor, and the needy person more profit, since honor is the reward of virtue and beneficence, while profit is what supplies need.”³¹

²⁶ Disputes will arise in the surface level friendships (and especially in friendships of utility) which will lead to the dissolution of the relationship (Aristotle, 1163a).

²⁷ Aristotle even goes a step further to say that “accusations and reproaches arise *only or most often* in friendship for utility” (Aristotle, 1162b; emphasis added).

²⁸ Aristotle, 1162b

²⁹ Aristotle, 1162b

³⁰ Aristotle, 1162b-1163a

³¹ Aristotle, 1163a

Love for the sake of pleasure

Love for the sake of pleasure similarly does not require loving the other for the other's own sake; this kind of relationship is based solely upon the pleurability (or delight) it provides to the individuals at the time.³² Unlike friendships of utility, not many accusations arise "among friends for pleasure. For [each friend gets] what they want at the same time if they enjoy spending their time together; and someone who accused his friend of not pleasing him would appear ridiculous, when he is free to spend his days without the friend's company."³³ With the passing of time, what people in relationships of pleasure perceived to be pleasurable will change as they themselves change.³⁴ As this change occurs, the relationships built upon foundations of pleasure will collapse and they will be compelled to build new ones if the relationship is going to survive.³⁵

The passions which bind the man and woman in superficial intimacy with one another for a time are fleeting and pass away.³⁶ If the sole foundation upon which relationship is built is

³² This form of friendship is most commonly among young people who "are guided by their feelings, and they pursue above all what is pleasant for themselves and what is near at hand" (Aristotle, 1156a). Aristotle further says of young people that they "are prone to erotic passion, since this mostly follows feelings, and is caused by pleasure; that is why they love and quickly stop, often changing in a single day" (Aristotle, 1156b).

An example of a spousal relationship built upon the foundation of the love for the sake of pleasure alone is a relationship between a very attractive young woman and a very handsome young man; perhaps each finds himself emotionally aroused by the other. In the state of emotional ecstasy, they may be very amiable toward one another. But, once the pleasure of the other is removed (beauty, charm, etc.) their relationship will fall apart since the pleasure which produced and sustained the relationship is no longer present.

³³ Aristotle, 1162b

³⁴ As one's desires change and develop over time, so too what he perceives and experiences as pleasurable changes.

³⁵ In friendships of pleasure, the association between friends is grounded in the pleasure mutually experienced. Once this pleasure no longer exists for one or both parties, the relationship is terminated.

³⁶ While the relationship lasts, they will desire to be in the company of the other. Once the pleasure upon which the relationship was based crumbles, the relationship is dissolved.

pleasure, then the relationship constructed by pleasure will die when the pleasure dies. While friendships of pleasure do not necessarily entail the presence of erotic love, nevertheless, it seems to be within this kind of friendship that *eros* finds its most akin expression.

Erotic love related to the love of pleasure

Having explored the kinds of relationships arising from one's sensual and sentimental attractions, it is important to consider more closely the distinction of the kind of love from which those attractions arise. As many of the foundations of John Paul II's presentation are laid by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, it is fitting that we turn to Greek terminology to find these distinctions. The vocabulary of ancient Greece distinguished several forms of love by terms that have no direct English equivalent. Three of these are particularly pertinent to the present exploration of love and relationship; these are: *philia*, *eros*, and *agape*. *Philia* (φιλία) is the "love of friendship;"³⁷ *ērōs* (ἔρως) is the "possessive or covetous love;"³⁸ *agápē* (ἀγάπη) is the "oblative" love.³⁹ What this essay understands to be *romantic passion* is expressed through *eros* love.

In his first encyclical, Pope Benedict XVI wrote that "love between man and woman which is neither planned nor willed, but somehow imposes itself upon human beings, was

³⁷ Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* [On Christian Love]. (Accessed October 1, 2014, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html). 3; it may be worth noting that Benedict mentions *philia* only twice in the document. His focus is primarily on *eros* and *agape*.

³⁸ Benedict XVI, 7

³⁹ Benedict XVI, 7; Aristotle does not refer to *eros* or *agape* at all in his writing on the love of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

called *eros* by the ancient Greeks.”⁴⁰ While being common to the human experience, *eros* is not always beneficial; it has the potential, as Stephen Brett put it, to either jeopardize or even betray authentic friendship by tending towards an “amorphous abstraction”—the *distortion of the life of the subject*.⁴¹ The amorphous abstraction described by Brett can be found in the fertility cults of the ancient world, as Benedict XVI explains:

The Greeks—not unlike other cultures—considered *eros* principally as a kind of intoxication, the overpowering of reason by a “divine madness” which tears man away from his finite existence and enables him, in the very process of being overwhelmed by divine power, to experience supreme happiness. All other powers in heaven and on earth thus appear secondary... [But] this counterfeit divinization of *eros* actually strips it of its dignity and dehumanizes it. Indeed, the prostitutes in the temple, who had to bestow this divine intoxication, were not treated as human beings and persons, but simply used as a means of arousing “divine madness”: far from being goddesses, they were human persons being exploited. An intoxicated and undisciplined *eros*, then, is not an ascent in “ecstasy” towards the Divine, but a fall, a degradation of man. Evidently, *eros* needs to be disciplined and purified if it is to provide not just fleeting pleasure, but a certain foretaste of the pinnacle of our existence, of that beatitude for which our whole being yearns.⁴²

It is possible, then, for the *erotic* and otherwise fleeting love to be purified. If the love of each person is thus purified, then it seems there is cause for hope that a relationship initially formed upon foundations of erotic love may grow into a relationship of agape or self-giving love. *Eros* is not being inhibited from its fruition by its submission to agape, but is being purified to attain its elevated status in service to the good of persons. If not subjected to purification, *eros* does not serve the good of persons but subjects one to another, reducing each to the status of a mere object for the use of the other.

⁴⁰ Benedict XVI, 3

⁴¹ Stephen F. Brett, “Eros and the Encyclical.” *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* (Aug/Sept 2006) 16.

⁴² Benedict XVI, 4

Neglecting the good of the other leads to disintegration

As stated above, Aristotle believes that friendships of either utility or pleasure (or both together) by themselves cannot be sustained beyond the endurance of either pleasure or utility from which they originated. A relationship of self-gratification—even if it is a situation of mutual self-gratification—cannot be sustained; neglecting the good of the other leads to the disintegration of the relationship even as it reduces the individual persons to the status of mere objects of use.

Indeed, no human being can satisfy the desires of the human heart that longs for infinite goodness. Hence, we should heed Pius XI who wrote in *Casti Canubii* that spouses should seek to aid one another in the pursuit of mutual perfection.⁴³ Yet, this is not the aim of relationships of erotic passion in which each person seeks his own ends without duly regarding the goods of the other. Nor is it the aim of a relationship that uses the other person for the sheer value of his utility. Such self-seeking love does not suffice for marriage, as Pius XI writes:

The love [of spouses] is not that based on the passing lust of the moment nor does it consist in pleasing words only, but in the deep attachment of the heart which is expressed in action, since love is proved by deeds.⁴⁴ This outward expression of love in the home demands not only mutual help but must go further; must have as its primary purpose that man and wife help each other day by day in forming and perfecting themselves in the interior life, so that through their partnership in life they may advance ever more and more in virtue.⁴⁵

The love Pius XI writes of is *proved by deeds* and *expressed in action*. Such love is enduring “day by day;” it does not built upon the foundation of a “passing lust,” nor does it necessitate the presence of *pleasure* (though it does not exclude the possibility that pleasure be present). Such

⁴³ Lisa Fullam. “Toward a Virtue Ethics of Marriage: Augustine and Aquinas on Friendship in Marriage.” *Theological Studies* (2012) 667.

⁴⁴ cf. St. Gregory the Great, *Homii. XXX in Evang* (John XIV,23-31), n.1.

⁴⁵ Pius XI, *Casti Canubii* [On Christian Marriage], (Accessed October 13, 2014, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121930_casti-connubii_en.html). 23 (emphasis added).

enduring love, necessary for marriage, is of an entirely different sort than the love which is described under the categories of this chapter as *romantic passion*. Rather, what is needed is a love that is rooted in the will, a love that will not vanish with the passing of pleasure, utility or emotions; what is needed is the *love of spousal friendship*.

Disintegration is harmful to marriage

It may not be clear at the outset why the disintegration of a couple's relationship is harmful to marriage and thus why spousal friendship should even be sought as a preventative measure against such disintegration. The Christian tradition presents marriage as a *covenantal* bond and not a merely *contractual* one. The distinction between these words is significant. A contractual relationship is one which may involve the mutual use of the parties contracting the relationship for some benefit to each. But when marriage is placed in the context of a covenantal bond, it means the establishment of "a partnership of the whole life... ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament."⁴⁶

A merely contractual relationship might be incurred by persons of a relationship based upon romantic passion—as described in the previous chapter—wherein it would seemingly not be harmful for the parties who mutually consent to remain on such a level, do so. When the utility or passion of the relationship dies—when either party no longer receives from the other what he literally *bargained for* from the other—each is free to part ways and the relationship disintegrates. Yet, as a covenantal relationship, marriage must endure beyond the flight of one's

⁴⁶ Catholic Church, 1601

subjective pleasurable utility—which may very well have caused the initial attraction of the spouses. Their relationship must be based upon some kind of relationship that endures beyond the experience of use or pleasure or emotion, for, when these fade the spousal bond yet endures.

Summary

Romantic passion, insofar as it originates in the sensual experience of the individuals and is—of itself—ordered as a good to the experience of pleasure of those individuals, is an insufficient basis for the establishment of the spousal relationship. Taken of its own accord, it seeks a good for itself that does not recognize the person any more than as the object through which the passion is roused and the good it seeks is attained for itself. This does not, however, exclude the possibility that romantic passion be present in the spousal relationship that is based upon some other kind of relationship.

Therefore, since romantic passion focuses on self-gratification, the kinds of attraction, the forms of loves and relationships arising from those loves are—of themselves—insufficient grounds upon which to base a spousal relationship. It must be reiterated, however, that while these things are not *alone* expedient for the spousal relationship, they are nevertheless not to be considered incompatible with it. On the contrary, a healthy spousal relationship *should* consist of elements of all of the abovementioned facets. However, the way about which this is possible shall be taken up in the next chapter of this essay.

Chapter II: Why and how spousal friendship is necessary to prevent disintegration.

The first chapter of this essay explored the nature of romantic passion and why a relationship based upon it alone cannot sustain the spousal relationship. The present chapter will explore why and how *spousal friendship* is needed to prevent disintegration. But first, it will be important to have a sense of what we mean by friendship and how we came to this understanding.

What is friendship? (A Historical Overview)

How to understand what we experience in friendship has been articulated and then developed over centuries. To explore every person who has ever written on the subject would be an impossible feat to attempt in this essay. Yet certain key figures ought to be mentioned whose contributions to understanding the nature of friendship have deeply impacted thought on the subject even until today. There is also, of course, a [literally] cosmic event which occurred and

necessarily left its imprint upon the discussion—altogether deepening it: the Incarnation and revelation of Jesus Christ.

Saint Augustine’s contribution is key because he is one of the most influential Christian authors to explore the nature of friendship in the early centuries of the Church’s history and was enormously influential to the Church’s later tradition on the subject. Aristotle and Cicero were major influences on him. Saint Thomas Aquinas—the ultimate synthesizer of the Christian theological tradition—relies heavily upon Augustine’s synthesis of theology and his integration of the philosophical themes of friendship (especially Aristotle and Cicero). Therefore, in presenting a concise historical overview, it is crucial to highlight some of the major contributions of each of these figures; yet this brief historical presentation of what friendship (in general) is will focus mainly upon the contributions of Augustine.

Use of the term ‘friendship’ was not very common in the earliest days of the Church’s antiquity. The 4th century, however, saw a leap in the use of ‘friendship’ where the foundation for discussion of the subject is rooted in much (though not all) of the pagan philosophical and literary writings pertaining to the subject. Apart from merely Christianizing the pagan concept of friendship, it should be noted that the advent of an imperially recognized Christian Church sprung a new interest in the subject as Church membership quickly spread across the known world.⁴⁷

The concept of Christian friendship, or what the Patristic Fathers called “spiritual friendship” derives out of the pagan notion of friendship to one that is oriented toward God

⁴⁷ Caroline White. *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 4.

through the exercise of virtue.⁴⁸ The virtue of chastity, for example, may be cultivated by an individual either with the support of another to hold him accountable or else by the encouragements he receives from his trusted friend.

Vittorino Grossi states that “Augustine brought the understanding of friendship to the anthropological level of human existence as such.”⁴⁹ By placing friendship on the level of anthropology, Augustine deemed that friendship plays an essential role in human flourishing.⁵⁰ “He included it in the list of common goods, like freedom, etc., that is, among the inalienable goods of human existence. Man, unable to live human life as a friend, deprived of reciprocal communication with his fellow creatures, would not live in a communion worthy of human beings but in the slavery of those who pursue illusions... Every human being must therefore be taught how to form friendships and be enabled to enjoy them. A human creature that is deprived of this good could not live his life at the human level, which presupposes reciprocal communication.”⁵¹

Aristotle's Ethics

Aristotle lived during the fourth century BC (384-322BC). His contribution to understanding the nature of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* has been foundational to many who followed after him (not only to Augustine, but also to Cicero and eventually Saint Thomas Aquinas and

⁴⁸ David Bohr, *Revised Catholic Moral Tradition* (Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1999) 272.

⁴⁹ Vittorino Grossi. “Sexuality and friendship in early Christianity.” *L'Osservatore Romano* (April 9, 1997) 10.

⁵⁰ Aristotle and Cicero would have agreed that friendship was crucial to human flourishing, but they did not have the revelation of Jesus Christ, and certainly had not foreseen the depth of intimacy mediated by the divine to the human.

⁵¹ Grossi, 10

others as well). Much of what will appear in the following pages of this essay are the foundational aspects of friendship that are articulated by Aristotle. Yet, a few key elements can here be expressed.

Aristotle argued that for authentic friendship to be present, each party must genuinely will the good of the other for the other's own sake and their reciprocated goodwill must be mutually known.⁵² The pursuit of a common good binds each friend to the other; the quality of that shared good affects the quality their friendship.⁵³ The good pursued in spousal friendship might be the flourishing or virtuous living of each spouse.⁵⁴ Therefore, the first key element to illuminate from Aristotle's work on friendship is his emphasis of the common aim of virtue between friends. Yet, only good people can truly be friends to one another.⁵⁵ Virtuous people are capable of desiring the good of the other for the other's own sake, while base people "find no

⁵² Aristotle, 1155b, 1156a

⁵³ cf. Paul, J. Wadell, C.P. *Friends of God: Virtues and Gifts in Aquinas*. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1991) 3-4.

⁵⁴ The enduring nature of virtue and its role in sustaining friendship is a departure from earlier perspectives of friendship. Love was certainly a subject of Plato's *Symposium*, but, as Kerr points out, in this dialogue, "it is assumed that the desire to possess and control is characteristic of all love – which, in any case, is of only one kind. Jealousy, anger at one's vulnerability, fear of instability, and so on, could be defeated only by submitting to the discipline of training one's love exclusively upon objects less fickle, unreliable, and imperfect, than human beings. Over against all that, Aristotle reminds us that there is a kind of love that really respects and enhances the separate good of the other person. It is a love that includes other kinds of love, which arise on more limited and unstable grounds." Fergus Kerr, "Charity as Friendship." *Language, Meaning and God*. (London: Cassell Publishers Limited (1987)): 17.

⁵⁵ Vicious people do not form stable relationships. Yet they may indulge in a relationship with another vicious person for a time – even possibly taking delight in the sharing of vice and vicious actions – but their relationship is unstable and will not endure in this manner. What might endure a little longer: if they form a friendship of utility or pleasure before their association in vice is terminated. Such persons will likely tend toward a relationship of utility – aimed at getting something that is lacking and returning something else – but even this relationship will not endure beyond its usefulness (cf. Aristotle, 1159b).

enjoyment in one another if they get no benefit.”⁵⁶ While a virtuous person can “be a friend” to a base person,⁵⁷ it would seem that a base person cannot reciprocate the extension of goodwill since he is incapable of genuinely willing the good of another for his own sake.

Reciprocity is a requisite feature of friendship for Aristotle. For this reason, soulless things cannot be friends.⁵⁸ “To a friend... you must wish goods for his own sake. If you wish good things in this way, but the same wish is not returned by the other, you would be said to have [only] goodwill for the other. For friendship is said to be reciprocated goodwill.”⁵⁹ But this reciprocated goodwill must also be *known* by both parties to be friendship.⁶⁰ Thus the requisites of friendship for Aristotle are: that (1) the individual must genuinely will the good of the other for the other’s own sake; (2) the other party must reciprocate that willing of the good of the other for his own sake; (3) the reciprocated goodwill of each party must be known by the other.⁶¹ Much more could be said of Aristotle’s corpus on friendship—and several other things will be—however, for now it will suffice to move on to Cicero and show how Augustine modified some of Cicero’s ideas about friendship.

⁵⁶ Aristotle, 1157a

⁵⁷ This is to say that the virtuous person can extend the love of the other for the other’s own sake to such a person.

⁵⁸ cf. Aristotle, 1155b

⁵⁹ Aristotle, 1155b

⁶⁰ cf. Aristotle, 1156a

⁶¹ This third point entails that there be some degree of healthy communication existing between friends. Fr. Stephen F. Brett summed up the essential characteristics of friendship in Aristotle in a slightly different way as: “(1) a mutual attraction by two subjects to a common good, (2) a desire for good to the friend, (3) an awareness of the other’s benevolence and reciprocity of this good will, (4) some regular communication of this good will in light of the overarching good that began and continues to ground their friendship” (Brett, 18).

Augustine builds upon Cicero

Keeping in mind that Aristotle was a predecessor of Cicero, Cicero's work can, in a sense, be seen to build and develop from the Aristotelian corpus. Cicero was a Roman philosopher who lived around the first century before Christ (106-43BC). Saint Augustine's own understanding of the nature of friendship, as was mentioned above, draws heavily from the perspectives of both Aristotle and Cicero.⁶² To Cicero, "friendship is, 'an agreement on all things human and divine with goodwill and love' (Cicero *Laelius* 6.20)... 'so that many should, as it were, become one soul' (Cicero *Laelius* 25.92)."⁶³ But to this definition Augustine "adds that the source of friendship is God's grace (*Confessions* 4.4.7); that the unity of the body of Christ provides the solidest base for friendship... and love of God in one's friend is the best way to love him properly (*Confessions* 4.9.14)."⁶⁴ Marie Aquinas McNamara paraphrases Augustine's definition of friendship from the *Soliloquies* wherein Augustine emphasizes the active element of friendship: "it is a sympathy for one who is aspiring toward God, something which continues and helps him to grow in love of God."⁶⁵

Using the classical notion of friendship as his point of departure, Augustine constructs a fundamentally Christian concept of friendship which will be capable of extending even beyond

⁶² It seems that Cicero himself often uses the term *amicitia* in the sense of the Greek *philia*. The broad range of meaning which this affiliation incorporates will span relationships "of material, physical, psychological and sociological expediency as well as the closest of interpersonal relationships within the family unit." John F. Monagle. "Friendship in St. Augustine's Biography: Classical notion of Friendship." *Augustinian Studies* (1971) 93.

⁶³ Carol Harrison. *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*. (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2000) 162.

⁶⁴ Harrison, 162

⁶⁵ Marie Aquinas McNamara. *Friendship in Saint Augustine*. (Fribourg: University Press, 1958). 199; cf. Augustine, *Soliloquies*, 7, 20, 22; This subject will be explored in greater depth in the third chapter of this essay.

time and into perpetuity.⁶⁶ To this end, McNamara finds “four fundamental points which distinguish [Augustine’s notion of Christian friendship] from friendship according to the pagan ethos.”⁶⁷ These are: (1) “God is the author and giver of friendship;”⁶⁸ (2) “Friendship must be stabilized in Him;”⁶⁹ (3) “Christian friendship is transfigured by grace. It surpasses the noble pagan ideal of Cicero where friends wish for each other the highest degree of natural virtue possible in this life; friends united by its bonds wish for each other a supernaturally virtuous life here and eternal happiness with God in heaven;”⁷⁰ (4) “Friendship will attain its perfection only in heaven.”⁷¹

It is inadequate to say that *a kind of equality* is required for friendship in Augustine’s thought. Augustine believes that real friendship is only present when it is lived in imitation of Christ, who loved us onto death. Yet, in commenting on John 15:13,⁷² Augustine writes that “the martyr of Christ is far inferior to Christ.”⁷³ Nevertheless, the martyrs receive the Lord in the Eucharist and follow in His witness by giving of themselves “for the sake of their brethren.”⁷⁴ Augustine elaborates on the infinite divide between Christ and those who seek to imitate Him in friendship; he calls any man who would dare to claim equality with Christ a man living a “life of

⁶⁶ McNamara, 196

⁶⁷ McNamara, 196

⁶⁸ McNamara, 196

⁶⁹ McNamara, 196

⁷⁰ McNamara, 197

⁷¹ McNamara, 197

⁷² “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13, RSV).

⁷³ Augustine, *Tractate 84*, 135

⁷⁴ Augustine, *Tractate 84*, 135

deceit.”⁷⁵ The inequality existing between Jesus Christ and the individual human being is not the result of any lack in Jesus’ own humanity; it is the inestimable disparity between His virtue and our own. So to what, if not equality, can we point as the facilitating medium of friendship in Augustine’s mind? Charity itself is this medium; through charity our souls are elevated so that we share in the very life of God. It was through the exercise of charity that Christ conquered sin and death.⁷⁶ Now we are to “love one another as Christ both loved us and handed himself over for us.”⁷⁷

Augustine brings together the Greek notion of *philia*, Cicero’s use of *amicitia* (friendship), and his own meditations on Scripture to arrive at his distinctively Christian version of friendship—which is higher than anything that the pagan philosophers had hitherto imagined.⁷⁸ Augustine elevates the meaning of the term *amicitia* from Greek notion of *philia* by employing it to speak even of this distinctively Christian form of friendship. This new, higher, and distinctively Christian form of friendship is characterized precisely by the exercise of fraternal charity.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Augustine, *Tractate 84*, 135; cf. Proverbs 23:3

⁷⁶ While still using the term *amicitia*, the signification given in such contexts takes the meaning of this term beyond that intended in the Greek sense of the term *philia*; Augustine employs *amicitia* precisely to signify Christian fraternal charity which is exercised by each party of the friendship (Monagle, 83). Yet, even this notion of friendship is not the highest form as can be manifested; the highest form of friendship will be experienced in heaven between us and the angels: *amicitia sanctorum* (cf. City of God, 19:9) and at last with Christ Himself: *amicitiam Christi* (Monagle, 83).

⁷⁷ Augustine, *Tractate 84*, 136

⁷⁸ Monagle, 92

⁷⁹ Monagle, 92

Friendship in Saint Augustine

Friendship plays a crucial role in safeguarding and advancing healthy human relationships; perhaps this is why Saint Augustine (354-430AD) wrote so frequently about it. While no single treatise on the subject was composed by him, there are many contexts in which he brings in the subject of friendship when writing about other matters.⁸⁰ Those contexts themselves can be telling about how Augustine understood friendship's role in preventing the disintegration of human relationships. Some significant references can be found in his writings that specifically address spousal friendship and its role in sustaining the context for the expression of spousal love.

One such reference comes from his short treatise, *On Faith in Things Unseen*. In this treatise, Augustine defends Christian Faith—as a thing that is unseen—by demonstrating that the goodwill of friendship is real—though it is a thing unseen.⁸¹ Faith is placed in a friend even though his fidelity cannot be visibly manifest except what may be said to be manifest through his deeds.⁸² Then, in the fourth paragraph of the treatise, Augustine claims that friendship is so very fundamental to human relationship that, without it, all other human relationships will disintegrate. He writes that:

⁸⁰ Augustine uses the term *amicitia* in a broad spectrum of relational contexts: relationships between worldly people, relationships of fraternal charity between Christians, relationships with the angels, and even the relationship with God which elevates us to participation in His very life (cf. Marie Aquinas McNamara. *Friendship in Saint Augustine*. (Fribourg: University Press, 1958) 194-195). Since Augustine used the term *amicitia* in all of these contexts, it is precisely through the context in which the term appears that we must determine whether the use of the term is made in reference to specifically Christian friendship (cf. McNamara, 195).

⁸¹ cf. Augustine. *On Faith in Things Unseen*. (Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight). <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1305.htm>>. §2

⁸² Augustine. *On Faith in Things Unseen*. §2-3

Friendship perishing, there will be preserved in the mind the bonds neither of marriages, nor of kindreds and relations; because in these also there is assuredly a friendly union of sentiment. Spouse therefore will not be able to love spouse in turn, inasmuch as each believes not the other's love, because the love itself cannot be seen.⁸³

The tendency of relationships merely of romantic passion toward disintegration was discussed in the previous chapter of this essay. In this citation from Augustine's treatise it is clear that he thinks friendship is necessary—not only for sustaining the bond of marriage in the spousal relationship—but even for sustaining any intimate relation between “kindreds and relations” as well. Without the love characteristic of friendship, the spousal relationship tends toward a harmful disintegration by the reduction of the spouses to mere objects of use through the pursuit of self-gratification (as was discussed in the previous chapter of this essay). Augustine believed, furthermore, that the very “essence of the institution of marriage is a unique kind of loving friendship.”⁸⁴ His book, *On the Good of Marriage*,⁸⁵ begins:

Every individual belongs to the human race, and by virtue of his humanity he is a social being. In addition, he possesses the great and natural blessing of a capacity for friendship. It was with these purposes that God decided to create all humanity from one man, so that all would be kept in community with each other not only by similarity of species but also by the bond of kinship. Hence the first natural link in human society is that between man and wife. Even these God did not create as separate individuals and then unite them as strangers by birth, but he fashioned the wife from the husband, and signaled the strength of their union by the flank from which she was drawn and formed; for those who walk together, and together observe the direction which they are taking, are joined side by side in unity. The next link in the chain of community is children, the sole worthy outcome not of the union between male and female, but of sexual intercourse; for even without such sexual association there could exist a true union of friendship between the two sexes, with the one governing and the other obeying.⁸⁶

⁸³ Augustine. *On Faith in Things Unseen*. §4

⁸⁴ Perry Cahall. “The Proper Order of Conjugal Love: The Relevance of St. Augustine’s Insights,” *Logos*, (Winter 2005): 123.

⁸⁵ *De Bono Coniugali*

⁸⁶ Augustine. *De Bono Coniugali, De Sancta Virginitate*. (Translated by P. G. Walsh. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001). 3

Augustine argues that marriage existed as a special bond from the very creation of the human race.⁸⁷ But in starting his book *On the Good of Marriage* by invoking the social nature of human beings, he immediately set the genesis of the spousal relationship within a discussion of friendship between persons. Quite in opposition to a relationship wherein two individuals are joined who seek goods merely for themselves through the other person (bodily, emotionally, or in some other way), marriage requires a relationship in which the individual good of the other is sought by each person.⁸⁸ Now, this idea of friendship existing in marriage is not wholly an innovation of Augustine; in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle saw the possibility of an authentic relationship of friendship existing between a husband and wife.⁸⁹ Augustine's fundamental presentation of the nature of friendship—and that of the rest of the Christian tradition—relies heavily upon the nature of friendship as it is presented by these early philosophers.

Friendship in Aquinas

Likewise, Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274_{AD}) relies heavily upon both Augustine and Aristotle throughout much of his own theological undertakings; the subject of friendship is no

⁸⁷ cf. Genesis 2:21-25

⁸⁸ Fr. Stephen F. Brett sums up Augustine's understanding of friendship as "a union of one soul with two bodies" (Brett, 17).

⁸⁹ cf. Aristotle, 1161a24, 1162a17-35. Yet, this point is sometimes missed in discussing the contributions of Augustine. For instance, in the 3rd footnote of his translation of Augustine's *De Bono Coniugali*, P.G. Walsh writes that: "in Plato's *Lysis*, in the two books on friendship in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and in Cicero's *De amicitia*, friendship is envisaged wholly in terms of the relationship between men, considered on a higher plane than that between man and wife... Augustine seems here concerned to endow Christian marriage with a dignity higher than the institution had enjoyed earlier" (Augustine, *De Bono Coniugali*, 2).

exception. He builds upon Augustine's affiliation of charity with friendship.⁹⁰ In the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas goes so far as to define charity as a kind of friendship.⁹¹ Aquinas writes that "not every love has the character of friendship, but that love which is together with benevolence, when, to wit, we love someone so as to wish good to him. If, however, we do not wish good to what we love, but wish its good for ourselves, (thus we are said to love wine, or a horse, or the like) it is love not of friendship, but of a kind of concupiscence."⁹² Charity in Aquinas' mind is essentially "the friendship of human beings for God."⁹³ In this regard at least,

⁹⁰ It should be duly noted that Aquinas rarely ever wrote of the nature of charity in his career as a theologian. One of these occasions—found in his *Summa Theologica*—marked a change in his understanding of the nature of charity to be characterized by friendship which Kerr believe resulted from Aquinas re-reading Aristotle's *Ethics* (cf. Kerr, 3).

Mark Huberty suggests that the change in Aquinas's perspective might just as easily be explained by the *contextual* difference in his discussions of charity—that is, when Aquinas wrote his *Summa*, he was no longer working "within the framework and terminology of Lombard; he is treating man as created by God, but not necessarily within a Christological context" (Mark A. Huberty. "Friendship with God: The Model of *Caritas* in St. Thomas Aquinas." *Master of Arts in Theology Thesis*. (Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity: Saint Paul, MN, 1996): 22-23).

⁹¹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Ia IIae Q. 26 A. 4. Also, in *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* Aquinas says that charity is prior to friendship. He writes: "Friendship is not held to be a virtue, but the *result* of a virtue. The reason is that when people possess virtue and love the good of reason, as a result, by virtue's own inclination, they love those who are like them, i.e. other virtuous people, in whom the good of reason flourishes. But friendship towards God, insofar as God is blessed and the cause of blessedness, need to precede those virtues that order us to blessedness. That is why, since it does not follow, but comes before, other virtues, as I have shown, it needs to be a virtue in itself" (Thomas Aquinas. *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 120 ("On Charity" A. 2, R. 8)).

⁹² Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* IIa IIae Q. 24 Art. 1; Notably, Aquinas names the *love of friendship* "benevolence." Yet, the significance of this *benevolence* and Aquinas' definition of charity as friendship with God will not be examined until the following chapter of this essay.

⁹³ Donald X. Burt *Augustine's World: An Introduction to His Speculative Philosophy* (Maryland: University Press of America Inc., 1996) 679. In defining charity in terms of friendship, Aquinas proposes three characteristics of charity—borrowed from Aristotle—through which we can better understand what charity is. These are: "benevolence, mutuality, and community of life" (Huberty, 24). By benevolence, the other's good is being willed by his friend while respecting the autonomy of that other. The friend is loved for himself and "the active seeking of [his] good is the sustaining project of the lover's life" (Paul J. Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life*. (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1989): 131-132). This reference is also cited in Huberty, 25. Mutuality is about reciprocation—

Aquinas departs from Aristotle—who believed that such friendship with the divine was impossible due to the profound inequality between the divine and human.⁹⁴

Aquinas divides the discussion of love into two species: concupiscence and benevolence. Only one of these is an expression of the love that respects the dignity of another person as a person.⁹⁵ The love of concupiscence is the love by which we love something for the sake of something else. Aquinas himself provides two examples: wine and horses. Wine I might drink both for the sake of pleasure and sustenance. The horse I might ride or hitch up to a cart to carry some goods or people to a given destination. In either case, the object of being loved with the love of concupiscence is loved, not in its self, but for the sake of something else. On the other hand, the love of benevolence is the love through which the individual can experience friendship. Yet, benevolent love does not necessarily lead to friendship. For friendship to exist, the benevolent love must be reciprocated by both parties and recognized by both as reciprocated. But when all three conditions are present, the friendship experienced through the love of benevolence can take the form of the noble (friendship proper), the useful, or the pleasant.⁹⁶ Within the context of noble friendship the other becomes the *object being loved in itself* and not for the sake of something else; this is the only way by which another human being can be loved

the love extended in friendship is extended by each to the other (Huberty, 27). Finally, community of life entails that something is communicated between the friends; in the case of *friendship with God*, that which is communicated is beatitude (Huberty, 27-28).

⁹⁴ Burt, 679

⁹⁵ In his discussion on the virtue of charity in *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, Aquinas writes that “to love for the purpose of possessing it or owning it that good in which the blessed share does not put someone in the right state for blessedness; indeed even the wicked covet this this good. However, to love it in itself, wanting it to remain and spread, and wanting nothing to act against it, does put someone in the right state for the society of the blessed” (Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, 119 (“On Charity” A. 2)).

⁹⁶ These three loves of friendship are explained in Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics*; they were examined in greater detail in the first section of this essay.

adequately.⁹⁷ Spousal friendships, as well as non-spousal friendships, are to be found within the genus of noble friendship.

Engaging the Aristotelian terminology discussed in the first chapter of this essay, Aquinas affirms that a kind of genuine friendship can still exist in relationships of mere utility or pleasure. Yet to remain genuine expressions of friendship the utility or pleasure must be willed to the other for the other's sake and not for one's own benefit.⁹⁸ Pleasure and utility as expressions of friendship are of a lower order to the nature of noble (the truest) friendship.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁷ In the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, Aquinas says that "since the object of love understood generally is the good understood as something in common, it is necessary for there to be a particular good as the object of any particular love. For example, the distinctive object of natural friendship we have for our family is such natural good as we derive from our parents. For political friendships, on the other hand, the object is the good of the community. In this way, charity too has its own particular good as its distinct object, that is, the good of *divine blessedness*, as I said above. How things are to be loved by charity is determined by the way that they relate to this good" (Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, 147-148 ("On Charity" A. 7)).

Aquinas goes on to say that "when we talk of loving, which is wishing good for someone, something can be loved in two ways: (i) as the thing for which we want the good; or (ii) as the good which we want for someone. In the first sense (i), things can only be loved from charity if we want the good of eternal life for them. These can only be things that are by nature apt to possess the good of eternal blessedness. That is why, since only intelligent natures are by nature apt to possess the good of eternal blessedness, only an intelligent nature can be loved by charity, in the first sense of loving" (Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, 148 ("On Charity" A. 7)).

Further on he describes the second sense: "(ii), i.e. when we say that we 'love' the good things that we want for others, we can love any good out of charity insofar as it is a good for someone who is capable of possessing blessedness. For all creatures are there for human beings on their journey, to incline them towards blessedness. Again, all creatures are ordered towards the glory of God insofar as divine goodness is displayed in them. In this way, we are able to love everything out of charity if we order it towards things that either possess blessedness or could do so" (Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, 148 ("On Charity" A. 7)). Charity, he explains, incorporates all kinds of human loves except those that are based upon sin; thus, the mutual love of family members, fellow-citizens, etc. can be meritorious (cf. Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, 149 ("On Charity" A. 7)).

⁹⁸ That is to say, to be an expression of friendship, one must love the other with the love of benevolence; the love by which a person wills these goods cannot dissolve into a love of concupiscence if it is to be called a genuine friendship.

⁹⁹ "When friendship is based on usefulness or pleasure, a man does indeed wish his friend some good: and in this respect the character of friendship is preserved. But since he refers this good further to his own pleasure or use, the result is that friendship of the useful or pleasant, in so far as it is connected with love of concupiscence, loses the character of true friendship." Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia IIae Q. 26 A. 4.

friendship arising from a relationship of utility or pleasure is an expression of the love of concupiscence whereby a *means* is loved by which some good is attained for myself or another; meanwhile, the love of friendship is expressed in the higher form of *true* friendship whereby the person is loved as an end in himself.¹⁰⁰

Spousal Friendship

Spousal friendship is a unique form of friendship existing between a man and a woman who are bound in relationship with one another through marriage. Saint Augustine proposes that there are three goods in marriage: *Proles*¹⁰¹ (the procreation and education of children), *Fides*¹⁰² (the

¹⁰⁰ Keaty expresses this idea in slightly different terms; he writes: “love of friendship refers to the love that a person has for the friend. Love of concupiscence refers to the love that a person has for the good that is wished to the friend” (Keaty, 588).

¹⁰¹ Donald Burt says that, “Although procreation was the primary reason for the creation of the family, the essential element in the family is something else entirely. In Augustine’s view marriage is constituted by a commitment between husband and wife where each gives oneself to the other in a spiritual bond expressed through friendship. Augustine’s position makes good sense. Certainly no one would say that a man and woman are married because they share a physical intercourse. A true family is formed not by a passing physical encounter but by a permanent spiritual union of hearts. This conviction led Augustine to insist that a marriage can exist even when the union is infertile by reason of age, illness, or a free mutual decision of the partners to remain continent for good reasons. A marriage can exist without children and does not exist where there is no union of hearts” (Burt, 83). Several of the claims made here by Burt are seemingly confirmed by Augustine in the third chapter of his *De Bono Coniugali* (Augustine, *De Bono Coniugali*, 7).

¹⁰² Fidelity refers to more than the physical or sexual monogamy of the spouses. As Lisa Fullam explains, “it also implies a self-sacrificial concern for the partner’s salvation as well” (Fullam, 673). Augustine uses *fides* in both the narrow sense of sexual exclusivity and the broader sense “to indicate whole-hearted devotion to one’s spouse... that hews closer to the framing metaphor of friendship with which Augustine begins his treatise on marriage” (Fullam, 675). In his book *Friendship and Society*, Donald Burt adds that “Even though he usually puts procreation first in his list of the goods of marriage, Augustine maintained that the essential characteristic of a valid marriage is that it be a union of friends, a friendship solidified by *fidelity to one’s spouse (fides)* and the *permanence of the commitment (sacramentum)*” (Burt, 83).

fidelity of the spouses) and *Sacramentum*¹⁰³ (the sacredness and persevering commitment of marriage until death).¹⁰⁴ These three goods have been upheld throughout the Christian tradition.¹⁰⁵ However, Augustine also saw the role of the spouses as aids to one another in living out the Christian life. The role of mutual help is not as widely reflected in the Christian tradition as are his three goods, but *is* expressed in spousal friendship. Saint Thomas Aquinas' early works on marriage¹⁰⁶ largely echo Augustine's three goods. However, there are also developments "in his mature work" wherein he describes friendship as the "form of marriage—it makes marriage what it is. Marriage has three ends, but it is defined as a friendship potentially of virtue."¹⁰⁷

As was stated above, the subject of [specifically] spousal friendship was not much discussed in the Christian tradition. As recently as 1930, however, in his encyclical *On Christian Marriage (Casti Connubii)*, Pope Pius XI (1857-1939AD) wrote that the partnership of the whole life of the spouses is a "mutual molding of husband and wife... [a] determined effort to perfect each other... [which can]... be said to be the chief reason and purpose of matrimony, provided matrimony be looked at not in the restricted sense as instituted for the proper conception and

¹⁰³ Donald Burt explains that the sacred aspect of the marital goods is a reflection of the eternal love of God which we will not experience firsthand until we have reached heaven. He writes that, "Marriage is a sacred sign (*sacramentum*) because the permanent fidelity of the husband and wife reflects the unending love which will exist in its fullness only in the heavenly city" (Burt, 85).

¹⁰⁴ Augustine, *De Bono Coniugali*, 49, 75

¹⁰⁵ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that: "Unity, indissolubility, and openness to fertility are essential to marriage. Polygamy is incompatible with the unity of marriage; divorce separates what God has joined together; the refusal of fertility turns married life away from its 'supreme gift,' the child" (Catholic Church, 1664; cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 50 § 1).

¹⁰⁶ The section of the *Summa Theologica* that pertains directly to marriage was composed posthumously by his students, drawn largely from his earlier writings and notes on the subject of marriage.

¹⁰⁷ Fullam, 665

education of the child, but more widely as the blending of life as a whole and the mutual interchange and sharing thereof.”¹⁰⁸ Pius XI makes a bold claim, that what is here understood to be an expression of spousal friendship is considered *the chief reason and purpose of matrimony*.

In discussing the ends of marriage, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* quotes *Familiaris Consortio*, 13:

Conjugal love involves a totality, in which all the elements of the person enter – appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands *indissolubility* and *faithfulness* in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to *fertility*. In a word it is a question of the normal characteristics of all natural conjugal love, but with a new significance which not only purifies and strengthens them, but raises them to the extent of making them the expression of specifically Christian values.¹⁰⁹

Conjugal love is ordered to *a deeply personal unity* that leads to the formation of *one heart and soul*. By its nature, friendship moves the two into a deeper union—toward a depth of intimacy in which each is free to express love in vulnerability as is needed in the exchange of deeply *personal* love. Spousal friendship can therefore facilitate the personal unity that is characteristic of conjugal love. The role of spousal friendship is a significant theme in Saint John Paul II’s book *Love and Responsibility*, which builds upon the earlier tradition of friendship that has been examined in this essay. Of the nature of friendship, he writes:

In friendship—and here it is unlike mere sympathy—the decisive part is played by the will. I desire a good for you just as I desire it for myself, for my own ‘I’. The content and structure of friendship can be summed up in this formula. It brings out the element of *benevolentia* or goodwill, (‘I want what is good for you’), and also the characteristic of ‘doubling’ of the subject, the doubling of the ‘I’: my ‘I’ and your ‘I’ form a moral unity, for the will is equally well inclined to both of them, so that *ipso facto* your ‘I’ necessarily becomes in some sense mine, lives within my ‘I’ as well as within itself. This is the meaning of the word ‘friendship’. The doubling of the ‘I’ implicit in it emphasizes the unification of persons which friendship brings with it.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Pius XI, 24

¹⁰⁹ Catholic Church, 1643

¹¹⁰ Wojtyła, 90-91

John Paul II argues that the meaning of friendship is the moral unity of the two ‘I’s through the mutual extension of benevolence. It is crucial to note that the two ‘I’s remain distinct, though united. Unity of the two is the coming together of two distinct wills to mutuality whereby both wills will equally to either person the goods that are proper to both persons. In this way the *doubling of the ‘I’* unifies both persons to one another without either compromising his own subjective good or distinctiveness.¹¹¹

Spousal friendship prevents disintegration

The reduction of another person to being merely an object of one’s use is harmful to that person. It is certainly contrary to willing the other’s good. To use another person as an object instead of an end is to reduce the dignity of that person to something less than that person deserves by virtue of his humanity.¹¹² By virtue of their dignity, persons deserve to be loved as ends in themselves and not merely used as means to other ends.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Speaking of Saint Thomas Aquinas’s perspective on the equality of women to men, Dr. Mary Lemmons writes: “Sexual equality makes friendship possible between men and women. Aquinas accordingly declares: ‘Now, there seems to be the greatest friendship between husbands and wives’ ([*Summa Contra Gentiles*] III, c. 123). In this respect, he follows Aristotle: ‘Between man and wife, friendship seems to exist by nature’ ([*Nicomachean Ethics*] Bk. 8, ch. 12, 1162a 16).” Mary Hayden Lemmons. *Ultimate Normative Foundations: The Case for Aquinas’s Personalist Natural Law*. (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2011): 378.

¹¹² In an essay from the President’s Council on Bioethics entitled *Human Dignity and Bioethics*, authors Patrick Lee and Robert P. George describe the dynamic nature of human dignity by explaining it in terms of what is meant objectively—as applies to all people—and also in terms of one’s subjective assimilation of dignity. With respect to the objective dignity experienced by all, they write: “These basic, natural capacities to reason and make free choices are possessed by every human being, even those who cannot immediately exercise them. One’s existence as a person thus derives from the kind of substantial entity one is, a human being—and this is the ground for dignity in the most important sense. Because personhood is based on the kind of being one is—one cannot lose one’s fundamental personal dignity as long as one exists as a human being.” Patrick Lee and Robert P. George, “The Nature and Basis of Human Dignity.” *Human Dignity and Bioethics*. (Accessed December 15, 2014.

Spousal friendship safeguards the person by loving the other as another self

Spousal friendship prevents disintegration by willing the good of the other for the other's own sake. *Love of the other for the other's own sake* is the ideal form of friendship presented in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹¹⁴ Aristotle calls this form of friendship "complete friendship" [or the *friendship of comrades*] which is "the friendship of good people similar in virtue; for they wish goods in the same way to each other in so far as they are good, and they are good in themselves... these people's friendship lasts as long as they are good; and virtue is enduring."¹¹⁵

https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/pdfpreview/bitstream/handle/10822/559351/human_dignity_and_bioethics.pdf?sequence=1 410.

¹¹³ Persons might be *used* inappropriately as *means to ends* such as pleasure or utility. Pope Saint John Paul II explains the "objective purposes of marriage create in principle the possibility of love and exclude the possibility of treating a person as a means to an end and as an object for use" (Wojtyła, 30).

¹¹⁴ "Friends for virtue are eager to benefit each other, since this is proper to virtue and to friendship; and if this is the achievement they compete for, there are no accusations or fights. For no one objects if the other loves and benefits him; if he is gracious, he retaliates by benefiting the other." (Aristotle, 1162b).

¹¹⁵ Aristotle, 1156b. This kind of loving relationship is the ideal of friendship expressed in his *Ethics*. While he presents the ideal, Aristotle is not naïve to the difficulties of attaining its authentic expression. Aristotle warns against friendships which are not genuine but merely façades of friendship: "Those who are quick to treat each other in friendly ways wish to be friends, but are not friends, unless they are also loveable, and know this. For though the wish for friendship comes quickly, friendship does not" (Aristotle, 1156b). Just willing to be friends is not sufficient. Friendship cannot be generated simply from the desire to have an intimate relationship with the other person, even if he is a man of great virtue. Like any living thing, friendship needs time to germinate and to mature. Their friendship does not suddenly die when friends are temporarily separated from one another. However, if their communication ceases for an extended period of time, their friendship too will fade (cf. Aristotle, 1157b).

It is also possible to err in one's perception of the nature of a particular friendship. Aristotle says that "Friends are most at odds when they are not friends in the way they think they are" (Aristotle, 1165b). This error might be either a misperception on the part of the individual or a malicious deception on the part of the other. "If we mistakenly suppose we are loved for our character, when our friend is doing nothing to suggest this, we must hold ourselves responsible. But if we are deceived by his pretense, we are justified in accusing him – even more justified than in accusing debasers of the currency, to the extent that his evildoing debases something more precious" (Aristotle, 1165b).

If a friend becomes bad, Aristotle believed that he should be abandoned *only if* he is deemed to have become incurably vicious (cf. Aristotle, 1165b). But if the friend has irrevocably succumb to vice, then he *should* be abandoned. Aristotle explains that friendship is appropriately terminated when friends "come to be separated by some wide gap in virtue, vice, wealth, or something else; for then they are friends no more, and do not even expect

To love another person for the other person's own sake is to love that one as you love yourself; those who love in this way can be said to love the *other* literally as *another self*.¹¹⁶ Yet this also presents a limitation; the love with which one loves another is limited by the present stage of development of one's own self-love and by the degree to which one is virtuous.

If a spouse's self-love is well ordered, then his ability to love the other will be great because the spouse understands what the good is and his desires are aligned towards attaining the good.¹¹⁷ If his love is disordered, then that spouse's capacity for loving the other will be limited by the very limitations experienced in his very self. If one's self-love is disordered, then that individual cannot love the other person as another self because he does not know what it is to love *self* properly. Much less will that spouse be able to help the other person to grow in virtue if he does not possess the virtues personally. Aristotle saw the importance of the proper ordering of self-love and presented the five characteristics of those who have properly ordered self-love.

to be" (Aristotle, 1158b). The influence wielded by the incurably vicious person on his onetime friend becomes a real danger for the friend who chose to remain a friend of that incurably vicious person. "We ought neither to love what is bad nor to become similar to a bad person" (Aristotle, 1165b); though the temptation will be to do so. Furthermore, the love of friendship extended by the virtuous individual in such a case could not be reciprocated because of the wide separation in virtue between the two individuals.

But against the dissolution of the friendship on the grounds of the disparity of virtue and the increase in a friend's vice, Saint Augustine argues that a Christian ought not to abandon a friend to such a state. If it means that the virtuous individual must suffer, then his sufferings are able to be united to the sufferings of Christ. It is, further, because of Christ that the relationships should continue in the uncertain hope of conversion—for Christ does not abandon even the most destitute.

¹¹⁶ It may prove helpful to distinguish the love of self—or of another as another self—from what is sometimes called selfish love. The love of self or love of another as another self are properly ordered loves that recognize the goods needed by the self and rightly shun certain things that—while possibly good in themselves—are not goods that benefit the individual right now. Selfish love is driven by passions; it pursues things that may be good in themselves, but are either not beneficial to the individual's flourishing right now or even harmful to the person.

¹¹⁷ Aquinas writes that "Although one cannot be friends with oneself in the strict sense, one can love oneself. For, as Aristotle says... friendliness to another person comes from friendliness to oneself. Insofar as charity means love, one can certainly love oneself out of charity" (Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, 150 ("On Charity" A. 7, R. 11)).

Aristotle's five features of self-love

The key factor of growing in a properly ordered love of self is that the individual must grow in virtue. The degree to which each individual of a spousal relationship has attained virtue affects the relationship between them (as mentioned above). Insofar as one spouse's self-love is crippled by vice (disorder), that spouse's capacity for extending love to the other spouse is limited. Thus it is important to understand first how the *self* is loved properly so as to learn how the other too is properly loved. Aristotle's *five features of the self-love of the virtuous*¹¹⁸ are:

- (1) The one who has a properly ordered self-love wills for himself what is good; in his actions, he pursues those goods and achieves them. These goods are willed by such a one for his own sake.
- (2) The one who has a properly ordered self-love desires life for himself and self-preservation as goods proper to him.
- (3) The one who has a properly ordered self-love enjoys spending time alone because his actions were good such that his conscience is free from the turmoil of disagreeable memories, and he is therefore justifiably optimistic for future goods of a similar nature.

¹¹⁸ Similarly, Aristotle lists five corresponding features of vicious persons. Those people who have attained the virtues are appropriately called "virtuous" persons. The opposite of virtue is vice; therefore, those people who have not attained the virtues – but have attained their contrary expressions (vices) – are appropriately called "vicious" persons. Vicious persons have a flawed sense of self-love and are thus limited in their ability to love the other. For this reason, the friend's mutual role in aiding and facilitating the other's growth in virtue is essential to the flourishing of their relationship – especially in the spousal relationship. The *five features of the self-love of the vicious* are:

(1) They do not choose the things that are actually good for them, but instead "choose pleasant things that are actually harmful. And cowardice or laziness causes others to shrink from doing what they think is best for themselves." (2) "Those who have done many terrible actions hate and shun life because of their vice, and destroy themselves." (3) "Vicious people seek others to pass their days with, and shun themselves. For when they are by themselves they remember many disagreeable actions, and expect to do others in the future; but they manage to forget these in other people's company. These people have nothing loveable about them, and so have no friendly feelings for themselves." (4) "They are at odds with themselves, and, like incontinent people, have an appetite for one thing and wish for another." (5) "Such a person does not share his own enjoyments and distresses. For his soul is in conflict, and because he is vicious one part is distressed at being restrained, and another is pleased [by the intended action]; and so each part pulls in a different direction, as though they were tearing him apart. Even if he cannot be distressed and pleased at the same time, still he is soon distressed because he was pleased, and wishes these things had not become pleasant to him; for base people are full of regret" (Aristotle, 1166b).

- (4) The one who has a properly ordered self-love possesses integrity of intellect, will, passions and emotions; he pursues what is truly good.
- (5) The one who has a properly ordered self-love holds no dark secrets since he has done nothing about which he ought to be ashamed; but he shares “his own distresses and pleasures, more than other people share theirs.”¹¹⁹

These five features of the self-love of the virtuous are applied toward the other as another self in friendship. For spousal friendship to flourish, each spouse will need to have a true sense of self-love in order that the love extended to the other will be an authentic expression of love and a genuine willing of what is truly good.

The first of these five features is that (1) the individual genuinely desires and pursues what is truly good for himself. While this may seem like an obvious conjecture, it remains the case that many persons will pursue things that they acknowledge are unhealthy for themselves and their flourishing.¹²⁰ The second feature is similar to the first; the second feature (2) specifies that the goods of life and self-preservation as goods that are pursued as proper to him. The third feature of self-love is that (3) the actions of virtuous individuals are good such that they do not incur the guilt of conscience. The individual therefore experiences a freedom of mind that allows him to be at peace with himself even in the absence of others and other activity. The fourth feature (4) entails the proper integration of all human faculties within the individual; his intellect and will inform his lower faculties so that the good is pursued and he is not consumed

¹¹⁹ Aristotle, 1166a

¹²⁰ E.g. In modern western society, one might think of all of the kinds of unhealthy foods that are irresponsibly consumed by consumers who readily acknowledge their unhealthy nature, but continue to consume them anyway (these are sometimes called “guilty pleasures” by such persons). Or else, persons who have developed attachments or even addictions to unhealthy drugs or behaviors—acknowledging that they are in their present state—yet not ready to move out of their condition. Similarly, Saint Augustine wrote of his disposition at one stage of his life in the form of his heart’s prayer to the Lord: “Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet” (Augustine, *Confessions*, 169).

by the fleeting impulses of his passions and emotions. The fifth feature of self-love is most similar to the third; (5) in the absence of shameful activity, the virtuous individual is unafraid to share intimate details (when appropriate to do so) and is able to do so humbly.

When an individual is virtuous, he is capable of authentically willing the good of the other person.¹²¹ The five features of the self-love of the virtuous *as they are applied by the virtuous to the other in friendship*¹²² are:

- (1) The one who is a friend to others is someone “who wishes and does goods... to his friend for the friend’s own sake.”
- (2) The one who is a friend to others wills the good of his friend “to be and to live for the friend’s own sake;” this is especially the experience that “friends who have been in conflict feel [towards each other].”
- (3) The one who is a friend to another gladly spends his time with his friend.
- (4) The one who is a friend to another makes similar choices as his friend.
- (5) The one who is a friend to another “shares his friend’s distress and enjoyment.”¹²³

As was mentioned above, Aristotle’s five features of self-love are applied to the *other* in friendship of comrades such that the friend literally loves the *other* as *another self*. Virtuous persons love *themselves* and the virtue that they have attained. In spousal friendship, the self-love of the spouse both makes possible and facilitates the love of the other for the other’s own sake. It is insofar as the individual has a properly ordered self-love that he is capable to love the other properly. But once capable, it is through experience in one’s self of what the properly

¹²¹ It would seem that those persons who are growing in the virtues—but have not yet fully attained them—are still able to extend an imperfect expression of this love according to their capacity. But the authenticity of their love’s expression will be limited by their limitations of virtue development.

¹²² Therefore, the virtuous person “has each of these features in relation to himself, and is related to his friend as he is to himself, since the friend is another himself. Hence friendship seems to be one of these features, and people with these features seem to be friends” (Aristotle, 1166a).

¹²³ Aristotle, 1166a

ordered self is that that individual is able to love those features in another. Thus we see in these five features of the self-love of the virtuous applied to the other the *full appreciation of the self* which is manifested in the wholeness of the person.

But, in relationships where [at least] one individual is in a state of vice, it is not possible for that person to love the other with the love of self—simply because the vicious individual does not have a properly ordered *love of self* from which to be able to love the *other* as he loves his very *self*. In such a case, it would seem that the “love” professed by the vicious person to the other would be at best a reflection of the distorted inner chaos of displaced erotic misinterpretations of what genuine self-love is.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ An example of this is made in the *Confessions* of Augustine. In book 4 of his *Confessions*, St. Augustine reveals the depth of intimacy he had shared with an unnamed friend. At the friend’s death, Augustine marveled that “other men should live when he was dead, for I had loved him as though he would never die” (Augustine, *Confessions*, 77). He goes on to say “still more I wondered that he should die and I remain alive, for I was his second self... I felt that our souls had been as one, living in two bodies, and life to me was fearful because I did not want to live with only half a soul” (Augustine, *Confessions*, 77-78). In this sense, their relationship became a sort of reversed image of Christ’s two natures in one person: “theirs is an inverted Christology, a parody of loss and exaltation;” the two friends had become profoundly co-dependent (Richard B. Miller. “Evil, Friendship, and Iconic Realism in Augustine’s *Confessions*.” *Harvard Theological Review* (October 2011) 394). This co-dependence, while facilitating a radically intimate relationship between them, is not compatible with *true* friendship in Augustine’s mind.

As an introspective author, Augustine calls the depth of his intimacy with this unnamed friend “madness” because he had loved him as more than human; essentially, Augustine seemed to have replaced the place that God should have had in his life with his friend (Augustine, *Confessions*, 78). Thus, to love a friend too much – with the love due only to God – is to not love the friend at all in Augustine’s mind (Miller, 397).

Augustine had loved this friend “as a private possession rather than as someone whose goodness could be shared” (Miller, 398). What Augustine seems to highlight in the nature of real friendship by this dynamic of his story is that for friendship to be authentic, each friend must respect the autonomy of the other. When his friend regained consciousness and became appalled at Augustine’s criticisms of his baptism, Augustine experienced a sort of alienation. Their relationship had been rooted in a sort of fusion of mutual interests until the autonomy of the individual’s *otherness* gave way to *codependency*.

Qualities of friendship which are not exclusive to true friendship include being able to: talk together, laugh together, and express their intimacy through simple acts of kindness (cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, 79). Relationships of only romantic passion can even share in serious moments as well as deep/intimate ones. They can know the other

*Spousal friendship does not preclude the experiences of pleasure*¹²⁵

Spouses in such a relationship will experience the goods of both pleasure and utility—they will even experience other goods besides—but the foundation of their relationship is more enduring than relationships based upon either utility or pleasure.¹²⁶ Pleasure, for example, is one element Aristotle believes must be part of a friendship of virtue.¹²⁷ He could not imagine such a friendship existing where the friends did not enjoy one another’s company.¹²⁸

In a friendship of virtue, spouses will foster a desire for each to be in the company of the other; it is even possible that, exteriorly, their relationship may even appear to be similar to what is manifested by friendship based upon the love of pleasure alone. Aristotle believes that these

intimately enough to understand the unspoken language of the other’s expression. Yet, to love another for the sake of mere companionship is to settle for a *single part* to the neglect of the *whole* (cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, 83).

¹²⁵ It does not preclude them, but it offers the proper context for their full expression. In taking up the question of whether all pleasures are evil in the *Summa Theologica*, Saint Thomas Aquinas also asks whether the physical pleasure involved in sexual intercourse itself is morally evil. He concludes that it is not—that the pleasures experienced by the man and woman in this activity are natural—but he reminds us that Original Sin still deeply affects the man and woman and can still incline them towards sin (cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Ia-IIae Q. 34, A. 1, R. 1).

In an article entitled “Thomas Aquinas on Sexual Pleasure” John Milhaven writes that “Thomas denies flatly that sexual pleasure is a moral evil, and even implies that it is morally good. This is reflected in Thomas’ teaching that virtue need not restrain the amount of sexual pleasure the spouse permits himself in intercourse. Virtue lies in keeping the mean; the mean chastity observes lies between the vices of license (*luxuria*) and insensibility. The chaste spouse, therefore, *should* enjoy the pleasure of intercourse.” John Giles Milhaven. “Thomas Aquinas on Sexual Pleasure.” *Journal of Religious Ethics* (Fall 1977): 161.

¹²⁶ “Each of them is good unconditionally and good for his friend, since good people are both unconditionally good and advantageous for each other” (Aristotle, 1156b).

¹²⁷ It is typical of friendships based on virtue that they “spend their days together [and] find enjoyment in each other” (Aristotle, 1158a).

¹²⁸ “Blessedly happy people have no need of anything useful, but do need sources of pleasure. For they want to spend their lives with companions, and though what is painful is borne for a short time, no one could continuously endure even The Good Itself if it were painful to him; hence they seek friends who are pleasant. But, presumably, they must also seek friends who are good as well [as pleasant], and good for them too; for then they will have everything that friends must have” (Aristotle, 1158a).

friendships are rare since people capable of having them are few.¹²⁹ “Moreover, they need time to grow accustomed to each other.”¹³⁰ Though rare, such friendships experience the full spectrum of goods that could be desired in relationships of pleasure alone. Likewise, spousal friendship is capable of incorporating the full spectrum of relational experiences, including what is experienced by couples in relationships based merely upon romantic passion. They do so by facilitating the expression of pleasure and utility such that these do not dispose them toward the reduction to mere consumption of the other at the impulse of disordered passions, but rather to a deep appreciation of the other as good.

Similar to Aristotle, John Paul II argues that the experience of authentic love should integrate all of our emotions.¹³¹ The danger against which we must guard ourselves is to reduce our apprehension and experience of love to merely the emotional plane.¹³² “Feelings arise spontaneously...” He explains: “the attraction which one person feels towards another often begins suddenly and unexpectedly—but this reaction is in effect ‘blind.’”¹³³ Love cannot be reduced to the mere consumption of sympathy or pleasure. Love, rather, “consists in the thoroughgoing transformation of sympathy into friendship.”¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Additionally, there are many who simply are not inclined toward pursuing friendship. As Aristotle says, “Older people and sour people do not appear to be prone to friendship. For there is little pleasure to be found in them, and no one can spend his days with what is painful or not pleasant, since nature appears to avoid above all what is painful and to aim at what is pleasant” (Aristotle, 1157b).

¹³⁰ Aristotle, 1156b

¹³¹ cf. Sri, 42; Sri goes on to explain that John Paul II believes that “our emotions are meant to be caught up into our commitment to our beloved, thus enriching the relationship and giving us an even deeper experience of union with the other person.” Sri, 43; cf. Wojtyla, 75.

¹³² Sri, 43

¹³³ Wojtyla, 77

¹³⁴ Wojtyla, 93; John Paul II goes on to say that “Sympathy, in which the subjective shape of love is clearly discernible, falls one step short of friendship, in which love first ripens in its objective form. None the less, love

How an enduring relationship is fostered through spousal friendship

Spousal friendship prevents the disintegration of the spousal relationship as was stated above. Were it for the sake of disintegration-prevention alone, spousal friendship might be sought out as a good since the spousal relationship itself is harmed by disintegration. However, the spousal relationship is also strengthened through spousal friendship into an enduring relationship. This means that it is not only a means of preventing harmful disintegration, but also a medium through which the spousal relationship is most beautifully expressed. The total self-gift characteristic of spousal friendship is facilitated through a rightly ordered sense of the value of the other person and his complementarity to one's own self. Once perceiving the value of the other person has become the normative response of each spouse in relation to the other, then the natural response of each person—willing the good of the other for his own sake—will be their mutual growth in virtue.¹³⁵

The personalistic norm as a means of spousal friendship

Saint John Paul II provides a way of understanding the pursuit of the other's good as an end in itself: the *personalistic norm*. John Paul II argues (in conjunction with the whole Christian Tradition) that there is something special about the encounter of persons. His personalistic norm is the recognition of the dignity and value inherent in every human person. John Paul II defines

itself must be subjective, must reside in two personal subjects, take shape and find expression in them. We must not, however, confuse the idea of subjective love with that of subjectivity. Love is always a subjective thing, in that it must reside in subjects, but at the same time it must be free of subjectivity. It must be something objective within the subject, have an objective as well as a subjective profile. For this reason it cannot be mere sympathy, but must first include friendship." Wojtyła, 93.

¹³⁵ A virtue is "a habitual and firm disposition to do the good;" whereas, a vice is "a habit acquired by repeated sin in violation of the proper norms of human morality" (Catholic Church, 903).

what the personalistic norm is in terms of both a negative formulation and a positive formulation. The negative formulation of the personalistic norm “states that the person is the kind of good which does not admit of use and cannot be treated as an object of use and as such the means to an end.”¹³⁶ This means that a person should never be used *merely* as a means to attaining another’s good. The positive formulation of “the personalistic norm confirms this: the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love.”¹³⁷ This positive formulation implies that the encounter of persons entails relationship, for to love another entails entering into relationship with him.

The unique encounter of persons—of beings whose dignity reaches beyond any other creature in creation—requires a response on the part of the subject to acknowledge and respect the dignity that is theirs in virtue of who they are as humans. This dignity demands that the person never be reduced to the status of merely an object of use (according to the negative formulation). The personalistic norm acknowledges the other’s ability to pursue ends for himself. But it also provides the positive response to the encounter with a person: *love*. Thus in recognizing the dignity of the other, the personalistic norm safeguards the nature of properly ordered relations between persons.

Applied to the spousal relationship, the personalistic norm ensures that each spouse recognizes the other as a person and keeps his personhood on the forefront of any activity or choice to be made that affects the relationship between them. In this way, the spouses safeguard one another against the danger of reducing the other to *merely* a means of self-gratification—to a

¹³⁶ Wojtyła, 41

¹³⁷ Wojtyła, 41

mere *object* of use. The *personalistic norm* might be thought of as a *tool* wielded by each spouse *out of love* for the other as an expression of the *spousal friendship* that exists between them.

The spousal relationship as a friendship of virtue

When each spouse genuinely appreciates the value of the other and the personalistic norm becomes the normative response of each spouse in relation to the other, then the natural response of each person will be willing the good of the other for his own sake.¹³⁸ A paramount expression of this mutual love of the other then becomes the spouses' desire for growth in virtue both for one's self and for the other.¹³⁹ "Aristotle draws a strong tie between friendship and virtue—no good life is possible without intimate friends, the kind of friends who accompany, console, and challenge us to grow with them in virtue."¹⁴⁰ In a friendship of virtue, the spouses themselves strive for virtue and hold one another accountable to living virtuously.¹⁴¹

It is most advantageous to have a virtuous spouse as a friend present to support and assist in times of difficulty (perhaps when one is struggling to maintain virtue) or loss, etc. Yet, it is a fine thing to have spousal friendship in good times as well. Regardless, the presence of

¹³⁸ Both knowing the good and willing it require the development of virtues. Human virtues are "firm attitudes, stable dispositions, habitual perfections of intellect and will that govern our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith." (Catholic Church, 1804).

¹³⁹ "The friendship of decent people is decent, and increases the more often they meet. And they seem to become still better from their activities and their mutual correction. For each molds the other in what they approve of, so that '[you will learn] what is noble from noble people'" (Aristotle, 1172a).

¹⁴⁰ Fullam, 667

¹⁴¹ "Equality and similarity, and above all the similarity of those who are similar in being virtuous, is friendship. For virtuous people are enduringly [virtuous] in themselves, and enduring [friends] to each other. They neither request nor provide assistance that requires base actions, but, you might even say, prevent this. For it is proper to good people to avoid error themselves and not to permit it in their friends" (Aristotle, 1159b).

friendship in any time is pleasant.¹⁴² Spousal friendship disposes each to be eager to be at the side of his spouse in good times and bad. When a spouse is experiencing difficulty, the proper response of spousal friendship is to extend one's self in service to his spouse—not awaiting the other's specific request for his spouse's presence or assistance. In good times too, the spouses should desire to spend time with one another.¹⁴³

Aristotle lists several dispositions of the virtuous individual.¹⁴⁴ Such a person labors for his friends and for his country. He is willing to die for either his friends or for his country if the need presented itself. He willingly sacrifices money, honor, and contested goods in order to attain what is virtuous. He chooses “a year of living finely over many years of undistinguished life.” He chooses “a single fine and great action over many small actions.” When he dies for another, he chooses something that is “fine for himself.” He readily sacrifices “money as long as his friend's profit; for the friends gain money, while he gains what is fine, and so he rewards himself with the greater good.” He will choose what is fine “at the cost of everything.” All of these things should be characteristic of each spouse in relation to the other. If they are not, then either the spouses' friendship or the individual virtue of one or both spouse(s) is lacking.

This being said, there is something lacking in the human individual who has not intimately shared in the life of another. The interpersonal exchange is a relationship exclusively shared by humans among all of the creatures of the earth. While one can be fond of a dog or

¹⁴² cf. Aristotle, 1171a

¹⁴³ Each spouse must guard his desire from love of gain, lest their friendship become reduced to love of what is gained from the other (cf. Aristotle, 1171b). Still, Aristotle also warns also against becoming a “killjoy” because one desires to avoid being gifted by his friend.

¹⁴⁴ The following citations of this paragraph all come from the same section of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, 1169a).

some other pet, the gift of self cannot be made to any creature that is less than human since it cannot be reciprocated by any creature that is less than human.¹⁴⁵ Yet it is possible for the converse to be true: that the love with which one loves another *person* is *merely* the love one might extend to irrational creatures or even inanimate objects.¹⁴⁶ Given the depth of intimacy and the quality of endurance characteristic of the spousal relationship, to found the relationship upon anything less than a friendship of virtue would not fully appreciate the dignity of the persons engaged in the relationship.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Aquinas affirms Aristotle's teaching that, while we may be said to love soulless things, we cannot have friendship with them. He then distinguishes this form of love as the love of concupiscence whereas the love between friends is the love of friendship. The love we have for the friend himself is the love of friendship. The love we have for the good thing that we will for the friend is the love of concupiscence. Aquinas then uses an analogy to explain the difference. As that which is may be called *a being*, that which exists in another being has relative being, that is, it exists in a dependent relationship with the thing that has being. It is the distinction between essence and accident (what is essential to a thing and what is accidental to it). *Summa Theologica* Ia IIae Q. 26 A. 4.

¹⁴⁶ Such a love is clearly not the love of friendship. For, as Kerr points out, Aquinas's understanding of friendship presupposes that "we have (1) to wish our friend well for his own sake; (2) the well-wishing has to be reciprocated; and (3) it has to be rooted in a certain community of life. The object of friendship love has to be a being with his or her own separate and intrinsic value. It cannot be a chattel or any extension of the one who is loving, as a bottle of wine or a horse would be. One wishes the other well, that is to say, beginning from the acknowledgement of his or her independence and otherness. You cannot be friends in the appropriate sense, with somebody who is your slave, infatuated with you, or one-sidedly dependent upon you in some other way. Friendship is a kind of loving that respects and fosters the independent worth of the other person. Secondly, for there to be friendship of the relevant kind, the parties have to have this attitude toward one another: each has to be able to let the other *be*, so to speak. Thirdly, they have to have something in common which gives rise to and sustains this relationship. On Aristotle's view, friendship of this kind exists only between persons who resemble each other in being virtuous. The relationship is grounded on shared goodness of character. This is a daring model for charity (Kerr, "Charity as Friendship," 6-7).

¹⁴⁷ In his encyclical letter, *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI wrote that "Married love particularly reveals its true nature and nobility when we realize that it takes its origin from God, who "is love" (cf. John 4:8), the Father "from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named" (Ephesians 3:15). Marriage, then, is far from being the effect of chance or the result of the blind evolution of natural forces. It is in reality the wise and provident institution of God the Creator, whose purpose was to [effect] in man His loving design. As a consequence, husband and wife, through that mutual gift of themselves, which is specific and exclusive to them alone, develop that union of two persons in which they perfect one another, cooperating with God in the generation and rearing of new lives. The marriage of those who have been baptized is, in addition, invested with the dignity of a sacramental sign of grace, for it

That dignity, therefore, demands that the friendship of spouses not be a merely selfish pursuit for personal gain. If the person is to be loved in the married state according to his dignity, then spousal friendship must be aimed at the pursuit of a common good that will facilitate the reciprocity of their love.¹⁴⁸

The pursuit of a common good in spousal friendship

The commitment of marriage is safeguarded by the free expression of the love of spousal friendship wherein the vulnerability necessary for growth may be balanced by a persistent acceptance of the other so as to alleviate the fear of rejection; whereas, relationships that lack comparable commitment may easily find an excuse for dissolution.¹⁴⁹ The disintegration of relationships is harmful to the person and permanent friendship stays that harm by fostering a deep and intimate human relationship. Considering that to be human is to be a social creature (as stated earlier), it becomes clear that one cannot live an authentically human life without deep inter-human relationships. Seeing the other and seeking the good for that person both supposes an enduring relationship and sustains it once it is present. Spousal friendship prevents

represents the union of Christ and His Church.” Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* [On the Regulation of Birth], (Vatican Website, accessed December 10, 2014, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html). 8.

¹⁴⁸ Wojtyla... argues [together with Aristotle] that “*the only way two human persons can avoid using one another is to relate in pursuit of a common good*, as in virtuous friendship” (Stri, 15).

¹⁴⁹ Dietrich Von Hildebrand. *Marriage: the Mystery of Faithful Love*. (Manchester, New Hampshire: Sophia Institute Press, 1991) xi. In her introduction to her husband’s text on marriage, Alice Von Hildebrand writes that Marriage gives love the structure, the shelteredness, the climate in which alone it can grow. Marriage teaches spouses humility and makes them realize that the human person is a very poor lover. Much as we long to love and to be loved, we repeatedly fall short and desperately need help. We must bind ourselves through sacred vows so that the bond will grant our love the strength necessary to face the tempest-tossed sea of our human condition (Von Hildebrand, xi).

disintegration because it is, by its nature, an enduring relationship. Marriage requires such an enduring relationship; it is a partnership of the whole life.¹⁵⁰

After presenting the negative effects of *use* on the person in relationships in his book, *Love and Responsibility*, Pope Saint John Paul II presents the positive formulation of the proper disposition owed to persons. The personalistic norm insures that persons are viewed as ends in themselves and not merely as means (as was discussed earlier in this essay). Now John Paul II writes of the nature of the good that is mutually willed by each spouse in friendship. For the good to be mutually willed a couple of things are necessary: (1) each spouse must desire it, (2) each spouse must know the end desired by the other, see it as good, and adopt it himself. When this happens, “a special bond is established between [them]: the bond of a *common good* and of a common aim.”¹⁵¹ He claims that, once established, this special bond places the spouses upon “a footing of equality, and precludes the possibility that one of them might be subordinated to the other.”¹⁵²

Spouses avoid harming one another by adopting the ends of marriage as common goods. Without the mutual dedication to the common good, spouses tend towards subordinating each other to the satisfaction of personal goals; this tendency destroys the equality and the reciprocity that is crucial for the love of spousal friendship. Following Aristotle’s insight that relationships based upon only pleasure are not sustained beyond the endurance of the pleasure from which they originated, Saint John Paul II argues that “*the only way two human persons can avoid using*

¹⁵⁰ Pius XI, 23 (emphasis added). Marriage entails the establishment of “a partnership of the whole life... ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.” Catholic Church, 1601

¹⁵¹ Wojtyła, 28

¹⁵² Wojtyła, 28-29

*one another is to relate in pursuit of a common good, as in virtuous friendship.*¹⁵³ A spousal relationship built upon mutual self-gratification is unsustainable. By neglecting the good of the other, the relationship tends toward disintegration through the [possibly] gradual reduction of each individual person to the status of a mere object of use.

Spousal friendship leads to betrothed love

Willing the good of the spouse for his own sake by virtue of friendship love is good; it both safeguards the possibility of the flourishing of each person and facilitates that flourishing through mutual help.¹⁵⁴ The spouses make that friendship—their partnership of their whole lives—the good toward which they mutually strive. Yet, perhaps most importantly, spousal friendship facilitates the manifestation of betrothed love. In *Love and Responsibility*, John Paul II wrote of the development of love in the subjects from *sympathy* eventually to *friendship*.¹⁵⁵ It is within the context of spousal friendship that the spouses are able to experience the intimacy of betrothed love.

John Paul II identified betrothed love as distinct from every other kind of love that has been examined in this essay and in his book, *Love and Responsibility*, he writes that:

[Betrothed love's] decisive character is the giving of one's own person (to another). The essence of betrothed love is self-giving, the surrender of one's 'I'. This is something different from and more than attraction, desire or even goodwill. These are all ways by which one person goes out towards another, but none of them can take him as far in his quest for the good of another as does betrothed love. 'To give oneself to another' is something more than merely 'desiring what is

¹⁵³ Sri, 15

¹⁵⁴ Through the mutual help of the spouses in friendship, they each grow more deeply in pursuing virtue and avoiding vice. In this way, their spousal friendship both facilitates their personal flourishing in virtue, and helps them to avoid the harms of disintegration discussed in the first chapter of this essay.

¹⁵⁵ Wojtyła, 88-95

good' for another—even if as a result of this another 'I' becomes as it were my own, as it does in friendship. Betrothed love is something different from and more than all the forms of love so far analyzed, both as it affects the individual subject, the person who loves, and as regards the interpersonal union which it creates. When betrothed love enters into this interpersonal relationship something more than friendship results: two people give themselves to each other.¹⁵⁶

In this quote, John Paul II sets betrothed love apart from “attraction, desires or even goodwill”—that is, from each type of love that has been explored in this essay, including the love of friendship. The action of betrothed love goes beyond even the love of friendship: *willing the other's good for the other's own sake*; it becomes a *personal* exchange whereby the spouse himself becomes the good that is given to the other for the other's sake. The nature of betrothed love is that each spouse gives himself totally to the other.¹⁵⁷ In friendship, each spouse has willed the good of the other for the other's own sake—as another self; the good mutually pursued by each of the spouses in friendship is their flourishing and growth in virtue. But betrothed love involves *the surrender of one's 'I'*. This is similar but distinct from friendship; it assumes friendship and goes much deeper.¹⁵⁸ Rather than willing the good of the other for his own sake, in betrothed love, the spouse wills himself to the other in love.

¹⁵⁶ Wojtyla, 96

¹⁵⁷ In his summary of Wojtyla's *Love and Responsibility*, William E. May writes that: “A paradox is involved here, for persons are incommunicable, yet in betrothed love there is a full communication of persons, what Wojtyla later will term a *communio personarum*--a full surrendering of the self to another without losing possession of the self. What is paradoxical is that "in giving ourselves we find clear proof that we possess ourselves" (Wojtyla, 98). "The concept of betrothed love implies the giving of the individual person to another chosen person" (Wojtyla, 98). Marriage is rooted in betrothed love, which satisfies the demands of the personalistic norm. "This giving of oneself...cannot, in marriage or indeed in any relationship between persons of the opposite sex, have a merely sexual significance. Giving oneself only sexually, without the full gift of person to validate it, must lead to...utilitarianism....A personalistic interpretation is absolutely necessary." Marriage is the "result of this form of love" (Wojtyla, 99).” William E. May. “Karol Wojtyla's Love and Responsibility: A Summary.” (Accessed December 22, 2014: <http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/may/summaryofl&r.htm>).

¹⁵⁸ In his doctoral dissertation, John J. Fitzgerald writes of John Paul II's betrothed love that: “It “consists precisely in self-giving, in making one's inalienable and non-transferable 'I' someone else's property” (Wojtyla, 97). While betrothed love is distinct from any other form or element of love, it “can nevertheless not develop in isolation from

Surrender of the 'I' is a radical surrender of the will; it is a submission of one's claim to mastery over his own will to the other.¹⁵⁹ But in betrothed love, it cannot be a merely slavish submission—it is a joyous one.¹⁶⁰ John Paul II later writes that “[betrothed] love forcibly detaches the person, so to speak, from [his] natural inviolability and inalienability. It makes the person want to do just that—surrender itself to another, to the one it loves.”¹⁶¹ In betrothed love, the person actually desires to surrender his own will in order to be united to the other in betrothed love. Yet, submission is the path taken by love, not its end. It does not entail slavish subjection, but a willing obedience. The submission “enlarges and enriches the existence of the person... the lover ‘goes outside’ the self to find a fuller existence in another.”¹⁶² Thus, the person is not diminished but expanded through the experience of mutual submission.¹⁶³

them”; in particular, it must “ally itself closely with goodwill and friendship” (Wojtyla, 100).” John J. Fitzgerald, “Doing Good (or Evil) and Personal Fulfillment in the Thought of Abraham Joshua and Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II.” *A Dissertation for the Degree: Doctor of Philosophy*. The Catholic University of America: Washington, D.C. (2008). (Accessed December 22, 2014: <https://books.google.com/books?id=weLJGnbCM2UC&printsec=frontcover&hl=pl#v=onepage&q&f=false>). 167.

¹⁵⁹ The submission of betrothed love can be made either to another person or to God (cf. Wojtyla, 97). Yet, if it is made to another person, then it is only fittingly done within the context of marriage (Fitzgerald, 167; cf. Wojtyla, 99). How it is given to God will be explored shortly.

¹⁶⁰ John Paul II writes that “contrary to the superficial view of sex, according to which love (meaning here erotic love) culminates in a woman’s surrender of her body to a man, we should rightly speak of the mutual surrender of both persons, of their belonging equally to each other. Not mutual sexual exploitation, with ‘x’ giving her body for ‘y’ to possess, so that each can obtain the maximum sexual pleasure, but the reciprocated gift of self, so that two persons belong each to the other—this is the only full and satisfactory description of ‘betrothed love’, which finds its fulfillment in marriage.” Wojtyla, 126.

¹⁶¹ Wojtyla, 125

¹⁶² Wojtyla, 126

¹⁶³ Fitzgerald argues that Wojtyla has always held (from before and after being named pope) that “through self-gift in general we achieve an increase in perfection or fulfillment. In particular, he stresses that in order to attain eternal life, it is ‘essential’ to make a gift of self patterned after that of the Good Samaritan. He adds in *Fides et Ratio* that self-giving helps one find a ‘fullness of certainty and security,’ terms that could be part of ‘subjective happiness’ and meaning.” Fitzgerald, 171-172.

The self-surrender of betrothed love “is the result of a process within the person, and presupposes a mature vision of values, and a will ready and able to commit itself in this particular way. Betrothed love can never be a fortuitous or imperfect event in the inner life of the person. It always constitutes a special crystallization of the whole human ‘I’, determined because of its love to dispose of itself in this particular way. In giving ourselves we find clear proof that we possess ourselves.”¹⁶⁴

The reciprocal exchange of betrothed love between the husband and wife involves both the *total gift of self* and the *reception of that gift*. The mystery of reciprocity into which this exchange is caught up is that “acceptance must also be giving, and giving receiving. Love is of its nature reciprocal.”¹⁶⁵ Both the man and woman must grow in their capacity to genuinely affirm the value of the other person through this exchange. The delicate nature of the exchange reveals that the *inner structure* of spousal friendship is essential to betrothed love.¹⁶⁶

Betrothed love is a deeper love than spousal friendship itself; yet spousal friendship may be said to be ordered to the expression of betrothed love. To say that spousal friendship is ordered to betrothed love and that betrothed love is something deeper suggests that the nature of the relationship from which betrothed love emerges is a distinctively *spousal* friendship. The distinctive self-gift that is both exchanged and received between persons in betrothed love moves the couple toward a commonality of will. Yet, the basis of this commonality of will arising from

¹⁶⁴ Wojtyła, 97-98

¹⁶⁵ Wojtyła, 129

¹⁶⁶ Wojtyła, 129

the mutual exchange of total self-gift is properly directed by and ordered to the love of God—lest it should lead to the formation of a relationship of co-dependence.¹⁶⁷

The scriptures depict the depth of God’s intimate love for the human race in spousal language;¹⁶⁸ the nature of the love that is being expressed through these references is betrothed love. Betrothed love is the sort of love that most accurately reflects God’s love for us and is the love by which we are called to love Him in return and our neighbors for love of Him.¹⁶⁹ Betrothed love, then, is a deeper participation in the divine. It entails, as Benedict XVI describes, the purification of *eros* love by which and through which our love most perfectly

¹⁶⁷ In the fourth book of his *Confessions*, Saint Augustine describes a friendship that he had with an unnamed friend that had become a relationship of co-dependence, though it was a friendship of profound intimacy. While this was not a spousal friendship, the example at least offers a real-life illustration of the dangers of intimate relationships dissolving to co-dependence. Intimacy alone is an insufficient basis for authentic friendship. Augustine argued that this relationship, though profoundly intimate, was not authentic friendship since it was not rooted in the love of God. Augustine, *Confessions*, 71-90; Miller, 394.

¹⁶⁸ cf. Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:14, 20-22; Ephesians 5:25

¹⁶⁹ Jesus issued His command that we love as He loved us: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 13:34, RSV); “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. This I command you, to love one another” (John 15:12-17, RSV). In *Love and Responsibility*, “Wojtyla links the commandment of love more directly to betrothed love than to any other of the aforementioned elements and kinds of love; ‘[T]he moral code which has the commandment to love at its centre finds itself in perfect agreement with the identification of marriage with betrothed love...’ (Wojtyla, 99; cf. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, § 15).” Fitzgerald, 167.

The paradoxical-sounding language of betrothed love is expressed in Matthew 10:39: “He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 10:39, RSV). While the English translation of the RSV might not capture the depth of this passage’s meaning, John Paul II cites this passage, noting its paradox, to illustrate the Gospel reality that “the fullest, the most uncompromising form of love consists precisely in selfgiving, in making one’s inalienable and non-transferable ‘I’ someone else’s property. This is doubly paradoxical: firstly in that it is possible to step outside one’s own ‘I’ in this way, and secondly in that the ‘I’ far from being destroyed or impaired as a result is enlarged and enriched—of course in a super-physical, moral sense.” Wojtyla, 97.

imitates the love of God. This betrothed love has its most natural context within spousal friendship—yet, even celibate men and women are called by God to live it in relation to Him and through relationship with Him, to live it in relation to all of humanity. Betrothed love—*the total self-gift made to another*—as it is expressed in spousal friendship speaks to every human vocation of the truth of love toward which all are called.¹⁷⁰

Summary

Friendship is indeed crucial to the spousal relationship. Given the importance of friendship to the relationship of the spouses and their good, spousal friendship is necessary for marriage. Now, this is not to say that those couples who have married prior to being genuine friends may not mature their relationship to become a genuine friendship. However, it does entail that in the

¹⁷⁰ Likewise, celibate vocations, with their deliberate orientation in this life toward the life to come, can inspire persons living the vocation of married life to remain steadfast in their love for God—in Whom is their source of joy and life and love. In this way, each vocation speaks to the others about the nature of the common destination toward which we are all drawn by love—God Himself. Thus all vocations are caught up in a dialogue with one another through which each manifests some profound truth about God; the vocation of marriage, in particular, teaches human kind about the nature of *betrothed love*. All vocations are called to live the commandment to love (cf. Wojtyla, 258).

In his doctoral dissertation, Fitzgerald seems to draw similar conclusions about the relationship between betrothed love and vocations; he writes: “As for particular manifestations of betrothed love, Wojtyla maintains that one has “the best possible grounds for speaking of betrothed love in connection with matrimony” (Wojtyla, 98). He also discusses betrothed love in connection with “mystical virginity—*conjugal love pledged to God himself*” (Wojtyla, 251). He is somewhat ambiguous on the question of whether betrothed love can also be found in other relationships (e.g., doctor/patient, teacher/student, pastor/soul); at the least, he does seem to allow the possibility that these relationships can reflect a “form of behavior [that] comes to resemble a complete surrender of the self and so establishes its claim to be love” (Wojtyla, 98. While Wojtyla does not cite the work of Dietrich von Hildebrand in *Love and Responsibility*, John Grabowski suggests that Wojtyla may in his discussion of betrothed love be “building on von Hildebrand’s analysis of ‘wedded love.’” John S. Grabowski, personal correspondence with the author, October 10, 2007.)” Fitzgerald, 167-168.

absence of genuine friendship what is sacred and essential to the very nature of marriage is at stake and the spouses may suffer greatly from this omission.

As has been said, a truly human life must consist of some true friendships. Similarly, a truly healthy spousal relationship will be based in the mutual friendship of the spouses. This spousal friendship facilitates and fosters betrothed love. Yet, there remains in the human heart a void for love that cannot be filled with the affections of any creature; God alone is capable of filling this deep longing. Also, the *betrothed love* of the spouses reflects the love of the Persons of the Trinity; grace is the source of strength and endurance for the spouses and imitation of the love of God—divine love—is the way by which the spousal love is purified and made whole. Therefore, spousal friendship is necessary for marriage; friendship with God is needed by each individual, regardless of their vocation—but in the marital context, it protects spousal friendship.

Chapter III: Why and how friendship with God protects spousal friendship.

In the first chapter of this essay, the nature of romantic passion and why a relationship based upon it alone cannot sustain the spousal relationship were explored. The second chapter of this essay explored why and how *spousal friendship* is needed to both: prevent disintegration and facilitate the expression of distinctively spousal love within marriage. This third chapter of the essay will explore the nature and importance of friendship with God in protecting spousal friendship.

The nature of God's relationship with us

The nature of God's relationship with His creatures seems to change over the course of the history accounted in Scripture. Yet, this *seeming* change in God's disposition toward us is actually not a change in God but a gradual transformation in our own understanding of His dynamic love. What came into being *ex nihilo*¹⁷¹ as good, yet rebelled against the Being through

¹⁷¹ Literally: "from nothing".

Whom it came to be, has been radically pursued by Him ever since. We human creatures have been privileged among all of creation to have received into our race the very God from Whom we came into being. If the purpose of what was written in the Old Testament could be summed up into one phrase, it might very well be, *God desired to make His dwelling with Man.*¹⁷² It is about relationship—a depth of relationship not fully realized by man until the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. For this reason, and since He took upon Himself our very nature, we can say that Christ came to reveal Man to himself.¹⁷³

Charity as friendship

Christ brings the Pagan notion of friendship to an unforeseeable fulfillment: Christian friendship maintains the good of natural friendships that were accessible to the pagan philosophers, but expands the notion of friendship beyond the limitations of mere nature by infusing a supernatural potency to friendship: the possibility of *friendship with God.*¹⁷⁴ This infusion expands the proper

¹⁷² The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that God desires “to communicate his own divine life to men he freely created, in order to adopt them as his sons in his only-begotten Son. By revealing himself God wishes to make them capable of responding to him, and of knowing him, and of loving him far beyond their own natural capacity” (Catholic Church, 52). This is ultimately accomplished by Jesus Christ on Calvary. Now we are able to enter into an intimate relationship with Him through Jesus’ Sonship. Thus, *friendship with God* in the Christian sense is only possible through the mediation of Christ and our sonship in the Son.

¹⁷³ cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 22

¹⁷⁴ In his Master’s Thesis, *Friendship in the Scriptures*, Fr. Benjamin J. Hadrich found that there are four features of the “friends of God” in Scripture. He draws these features from the examples of Abraham and Moses in the Old Testament and then links them to the New Testament by citing the fifteenth chapter of John’s Gospel. Ultimately, Fr. Hadrich’s work is building up to Jesus’ discussion of friendship with His disciples in John 15 at the end of his essay. The four features of the friends of God in Scripture are: (1) that they were chosen by God (cf. John 15:16; also the calls of both Abraham and Moses), (2) that those who are chosen answer the call of God, (3) that those who were chosen and respond to the call of God experience Him in “profoundly intimate ways” and (4) that after the experience of God in profoundly intimate ways, they depart from that experience “to facilitate a relationship

domain of friendship beyond the limits of the natural and elevates the potential of friendship. Saint Thomas Aquinas cites John 15:15, “*I will not now call you servants... but My friends,*” claiming that Jesus’ words are spoken “by reason of nothing else than charity” and thus that “charity is friendship.”¹⁷⁵ While some loves do not have the *character of friendship*, the love coupled with benevolence is proper to charity-friendship.

That Aquinas relied heavily upon the works of Aristotle and Saint Augustine in his own writings was mentioned in the previous chapter of this essay.¹⁷⁶ In his book *Friends of God*, Paul J. Wadell, C.P. argues that Saint Thomas Aquinas’ definition of charity as friendship with God offers “an interpretive key” through which to properly understand Aquinas’ entire moral theology in the *Summa Theologica*—but especially the *Prima Secundae*.¹⁷⁷ By defining charity

between God and men.” Benjamin J. Hadrich. “Friendship in the Scriptures.” *Master of Arts in Theology (Sacred Scripture) Thesis*. Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity: Saint Paul, MN (May, 2012) 32-33.

¹⁷⁵ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa IIae Q. 23 A. 1.

¹⁷⁶ These two writers are especially prominent in Aquinas’ synthesis of the Christian theological tradition, called the *Summa Theologica*.

¹⁷⁷ Wadell, *Friends of God*, 1; likewise, Anthony Keaty claims that “while drawing upon Aristotle’s account of friendship, Thomas at the same time transforms, or attempts to transform, Aristotle’s account of friendship by placing the moral life within the context of friendship with God, a form of friendship Aristotle could not envision... As Trinity, the most sublime activity is friendship; to identify charity as friendship should signify a participation by the human person in the divine activity of Trinitarian friendship.” Anthony W. Keaty, “Charity as Friendship.” *The Thomist*. (1998): 583.

In a similar vein, in the 19th chapter of her book *Ultimate Normative Foundations*, Dr. Mary Lemmons convincingly argues for a personistic natural law rooted in Thomistic principles that “is able to advance the cause of sexual equality and the dignity of women in the twenty-first century” (Lemmons, *Ultimate Normative Foundations*, 380). She points out that certain errors in Aquinas’s moral theology regarding the alleged inequality of women to men are rooted in the flawed biology of Aristotle. But these, she claims, do not actually form the basis of Aquinas’s moral principles. Thus these errors grounded in Aristotle’s flawed biology can be dismissed without affecting the integrity of the moral principles themselves. The *normative foundations* of moral theology in Aquinas are not to be found in the flawed biology of his day, but upon the *obligations of love* (cf. Lemmons, *Ultimate Normative Foundations*, 378-379).

as friendship with God, Aquinas communicates some essential components of this theological virtue that are to be lived out in the Christian life.¹⁷⁸

First of all, it is about relationship. Friendship supposes a two way relationship where the individuals are mutually willing good things of the other. The first move of the relationship is made by God in loving the individual.¹⁷⁹ It is not possibly a friendship until the individual reciprocates, according to his ability, that love. Now, the love with which one loves another for the other's own sake as another self is a love that Aquinas calls *benevolence*.¹⁸⁰ This love of benevolence is extended perfectly by God to the individual creature, but can only be reciprocated by that individual to the extent that his natural virtues have been developed.¹⁸¹ In this way, the

¹⁷⁸ Fr. Stephen F. Brett suggests that Aquinas made six major contributions to the understanding of friendship: “(1) the virtue of love as the template for friendship; (2) self-giving as the heart of friendship; (3) beatitude, the life of integral happiness inseparable from the Gospel, as the paramount goal of friendship; (4) a contemplative aspect of friendship, respectful of prayer and worship, moves friendship beyond the level of superficial bonhomie; (5) *caritas* is nothing other than friendship with God, elevating the Aristotelian elements of friendship into the orbit of grace; (6) the conversation or communion essential to friendship is now predicated on the richness of divine revelation, truths unknown to reason alone” (Brett, 19).

¹⁷⁹ In his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI writes that “He has loved us first and he continues to do so; we too, then, can respond with love. God does not demand of us a feeling which we ourselves are incapable of producing. He loves us, he makes us see and experience his love, and since he has ‘loved us first’, love can also blossom as a response within us. In the gradual unfolding of this encounter, it is clearly revealed that love is not merely a sentiment. Sentiments come and go. A sentiment can be a marvelous first spark, but it is not the fullness of love” (Benedict, 17).

¹⁸⁰ cf. *Summa Theologica*, IIa IIa Q.23, A.1.

¹⁸¹ Although charity is a theological virtue given by God, it has a natural form as well. The individual is given a superabundance of supernatural virtues by God, but what is received by the individual is received according to the capacities developed by him with the aid of God's grace. So, it is possible that the superabundance given by God might not be fully received by the individual—and different people will receive various degrees of this superabundance according to the dispositions they have developed. Thus, “each act of charity disposes to an increase of charity, in so far as one act of charity makes man more ready to act again according to charity, and this readiness increasing, man breaks out into an act of more fervent love, and strives to advance in charity, and then his charity increases actually.” Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa IIae Q. 24 Art. 6.

relationship of friendship with God is a relationship of an inferior with his Superior.¹⁸² Nevertheless, even Aristotle proposed that friendship could still be formed in such relationships of inequality.¹⁸³

Aristotle argued that for the highest form of friendship to be present, each party must genuinely will the good of the other for the other's own sake and the reciprocated goodwill of each party must be known to the other.¹⁸⁴ The pursuit of the good binds each friend to the other. Meanwhile, the quality of this shared good determines the very quality of the friendship between them.¹⁸⁵ The good that is shared between the individual and God in the formation of friendship with God is His happiness which "He communicates... to us."¹⁸⁶ This divine happiness is attained only through *union with God* in friendship.

This point should not be taken lightly. The previous chapter of this essay argued that spousal friendship is needed for marriage. The good pursued by the spouses who are friends of one another might be called "flourishing" or virtuous living. But, this is not the whole picture. Each wills the good of the other for the other's own sake as another self—as he wills that good for himself. But if the greatest good that can be sought for an individual entails the ultimate flourishing of the individual, then that greatest good for the individual is *union with God*. Thus, each individual wills for himself *union with God* and, by extension, wills *union with God* to his

¹⁸² Still, friendship can be formed within a relationship of inequality, as Aristotle indicated; it is facilitated by the exercise of virtue in the one whose virtue is superior to the other (in this case, God). That friendship is possible with God, however, was not known to Aristotle.

¹⁸³ cf. Aristotle, 1159a-1159b

¹⁸⁴ Aristotle, 1155b, 1156a

¹⁸⁵ cf. Wadell, *Friends of God*, 3-4; Wadell further points out that the intimacy between friends does not come about from their deliberate desire to experience it, but rather "intimacy comes from desiring a good that is loved by both."

¹⁸⁶ *Summa Theologica*, IIa IIa Q.23, A.1.

friend as another self. The experience of temporal happiness in Aristotle's account of the virtuous life gives way to a genuine experience of divine beatitude.¹⁸⁷

Aquinas argues that charity can be perfect in this life; but he makes a distinction. The perfection of charity possible in this life is the very perfection of God. As the object of the individual's love and the mutual good shared between God and that individual, charity is perfect. Yet, the degree to which the very perfections of God have been attained in the individual will vary and ultimately cannot be perfectly manifested in the individual in this life. As Aquinas himself says, "no creature can love [God] infinitely since all created power is finite."¹⁸⁸

Nevertheless, imperfect as our love may be we offer it to God in friendship. Since God loves us perfectly, when the individual authentically gives his entire—though imperfect—love as a total self-gift to God, the love reciprocated between that individual and God forms an authentic friendship.¹⁸⁹ Saint Francis De Sales writes of this loving exchange of friendship between God and the individual in his book *On the Love of God*. He writes:

[Charity] is a form of friendship and disinterested love, since by charity we love God for his own sake because of his most supremely pleasing goodness. Such friendship is true friendship, since it is reciprocal, for God has eternally loved all those who have loved him, now love him, or will love him in time. It is manifested and recognized mutually: God cannot be ignorant of the love we have for him since he himself has given it to us, while we cannot be ignorant of his love for us since he has made it so widely known and we on our part acknowledge that whatever good we possess is the true effect of his good will. In fine, we are in continual communication with him and he never ceases to speak to our hearts by his inspirations, allurements, and sacred movements. He never ceases to do us good or to give us every kind of proof as to his most holy

¹⁸⁷ Aristotle perceived of happiness as "an array of authentic goods that ennoble the human spirit" and not merely as an emotional experience (Brett, 16). While both Aristotle's eudemonia (Aristotle, 1095a) and Aquinas' beatitudo claim to be the experience of Man's ultimate happiness and fulfillment, eudemonia is caught up in the temporal realm and beatitudo cannot be fully experienced until heaven.

¹⁸⁸ *Summa Theologica*, IIa IIa Q.23, A.8.

¹⁸⁹ The total self-gift made by the individual to God reflects the very love of God, though in an imperfect fashion. It is the love expressed within the spousal context as 'betrothed love'—and we are meant to learn the nature of this love, in part, through the experience of the loving exchange of total self-gift between spouses.

affection. He has openly revealed all his secrets to us as to his closest friends. To climax his holy and loving dealings with us, he has made himself our food in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist. As for ourselves, we have freedom to speak to him in devout prayer whenever we wish, for we have all our life, movement, and being not only with him but in him and by him.¹⁹⁰

God's love is unconditionally extended to *all those who have loved him, now love him, or will love him in time*. The love by which we reciprocate love with God is itself a gift from Him. Indeed, the extent to which we can love God for His own sake is expanded by our participation in the total self-gift made at Calvary mediated to us by Him through the sacrament of the Eucharist. Through prayer and participation in Christ's total self-gift, the individual's capacity for charity is enlarged and his love is purified. The implications of this transformation of love through love apply foremostly to his relationship with God and secondarily with the relationship to others. This point will be taken up again shortly.

If God's own happiness—*His own supremely pleasing goodness*—is the good for which each spouse is engaged in friendship with God, then the flourishing of that relationship is also the good willed by each member of a spousal friendship. With the very happiness of God as their shared good, the spouses may actually become caught up in a three way relationship: man, woman, and God; only when God is present in marriage do the deepest desires of the spouses' hearts find rest.

¹⁹⁰ Saint Francis De Sales, *On the Love of God* (Translated by John K. Ryan. Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1975) 160-161.

Moving toward friendship with God

In Book II of the *Confessions*, Augustine describes a point in his life where he “cared for nothing but to love and to be loved.”¹⁹¹ During this period of his life, Augustine gave himself over to his lustful passions and *adolescent sex*. “Love and lust together seethed within me,” he writes. “In my tender youth they swept me away over the precipice of my body’s appetites and plunged me in the whirlpool of sin.”¹⁹² Notably, he makes a remark about friendship in this same section of his book. The *self-gratifying love* that he experienced at that time in his life, he describes in language of disorder and darkness; whereas, the friendship to which he referred is described as a source of light which he had already stepped beyond. Yet, a little further on he says that at that time: “I surrendered myself entirely to lust.”¹⁹³

Augustine begins Book III with another reference to friendship and how his lust had “muddied the stream of friendship.”¹⁹⁴ He goes on to say:

I had not yet fallen in love, but I was in love with the idea of it, and this feeling that something was missing made me despise myself for not being more anxious to satisfy the need. I began to look around for some object for my love, since I badly wanted to love something. I had no liking for the safe path without pitfalls, for although my real need was for you, my God, who are the food of the soul, I was not aware of this hunger.¹⁹⁵

What must be pointed out here is that the mature Augustine (who is writing the *Confessions*) has already tasted the experience of friendship with God. The language of his text is imbued with loving language of a dialogue between himself and God. Augustine analyzes his desires from

¹⁹¹ Augustine. *Confessions*, 43

¹⁹² Augustine. *Confessions*, 43

¹⁹³ Augustine. *Confessions*, 44

¹⁹⁴ Augustine. *Confessions*, 55

¹⁹⁵ Augustine. *Confessions*, 55

that period of his life in light of his profound encounter with God that came much later. His earlier misapplications of the love of concupiscence are now viewed in light of his deep encounter with God.

In his book, *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology*, Adolphe Tanquerey writes that “those advancing in the way of perfection practice the love of *complacency*, of *benevolence*, of *conformity to the will of God*, and thereby arrive at the love of *friendship*.”¹⁹⁶ The above-referenced quote from Saint Augustine’s *Confessions* shows that he experienced this journey in his own life.

Tanquerey offers some insights into the individual’s progress in the practice of charity. In general, one must remember that charity is ordered first to the love of God and second to the love of neighbor. By virtue of this ordering, growth in one’s love for God purifies both one’s love for God and one’s love of neighbor. Thus, growth in one’s love for God directly affects his love for neighbor as well.¹⁹⁷ As the spousal relationship exists between a man and a woman—two human creatures—that relationship is directly affected by the purification of love through loving God.

¹⁹⁶ Adolphe Tanquerey. *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology*. (Belgium: Desclee & Co., 1932) 574

¹⁹⁷ cf. Tanquerey, 574

The deepest longings of the human heart

In her introduction to her (deceased) husband's text *Marriage*, Alice Von Hildebrand wrote of the universal human longing for love—to love and to be loved.¹⁹⁸ Yet, this common human experience is incapable of being satiated by the affections exchanged in any merely creaturely (natural) relationship—friendship. As Alice Von Hildebrand writes, “every merely natural love is necessarily tragic: it will never achieve the eternal union for which it naturally longs.”¹⁹⁹ So something else is needed; some relationship which is much deeper.

Saint Augustine wrote of this deep longing in his book, *Confessions*. Augustine wrote that his heart was restless until it found its rest in the Lord.²⁰⁰ The danger that many people fall into is trying to satisfy this longing by investing themselves—their hearts—in relationships with things or with people who will, in some way, eventually let them down. It is inevitable. Yet the profound desire remains that cannot be satiated by any finite creature; this reality makes friendship with God crucial to a flourishing spousal friendship—lest the spouses attempt to satiate the longing for eternal love only through their reciprocated gift of self.

As was discussed in the introduction to this essay, all Mankind is affected by the sin of Adam and Eve. Our wills are disordered. We do not always do what is good for us or others; the original communion of persons is disrupted.²⁰¹ Yet, infidelities that occur in intimate human relationships cut very deeply, leaving wounds that do not easily heal.

¹⁹⁸ cf. Von Hildebrand, xi

¹⁹⁹ Von Hildebrand, xiii

²⁰⁰ cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, 21

²⁰¹ cf. Catholic Church, 1607

When the couple marries, their commitment extends beyond the “you and I” to a third party: God. Now, children, society, friends, family, etc. are also affected by their choice to commit their whole lives to one another. But the relationship itself is directly enacted between these three persons: the husband, the wife and God. In Christian marriage, the spouses commit to mutual subjection in imitation of the love between Christ and His Church. That love was a love unto death. Jesus Christ literally gave up His life in loving submission to the will of God His Father in order to bring redemption to a fallen race. Friendship with God and the role of that relationship in our human relationships is articulated in the 24th paragraph of *Gaudium et Spes*:

God, Who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood. For having been created in the image of God, Who "from one man has created the whole human race and made them live all over the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26), all men are called to one and the same goal, namely God Himself.²⁰²

We have been made in the image of God. We come from God, and our final goal is God. God was the first agent to act in this relationship. It only makes sense, then, that we should strive to foster a healthy relationship with the One from Whom we have come and to Whom we now journey.²⁰³ Likewise, it is through His Paternity that we share *a spirit of brotherhood*. *Gaudium et Spes* goes on to say that:

²⁰² *Gaudium Et Spes*. [Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World] Pope Paul VI. December 7, 1965. (Accessed December 15, 2014. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html). 24

²⁰³ Human love points to something beyond itself; to the divine which it can never fully grasp—though it will forever long. William Hoye addressed this reality in his article, “Human Love as Unfulfilling Union According to St. Thomas Aquinas.” Hoye writes that “the union sought by love [requires] divine being, which alone has the necessary ontological structure to bring about a union in which union and its reflection attain the longed-for fulfillment. Therefore, in the *present* human condition love is opened to a kind of union that can be attained only in the mode of eschatological hope. Love awakens a vision which animates hope. This dimension is necessarily eschatological. Nonetheless, the fact that the experience of love awakens a vision in us which can find no satisfying fulfillment in this life is purposeful. We dream of finding someone who is completely one with us. Neither is the

For this reason, love for God and neighbor is the first and greatest commandment. Sacred Scripture, however, teaches us that the love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbor: "If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.... Love therefore is the fulfillment of the Law." To men growing daily more dependent on one another, and to a world becoming more unified every day, this truth proves to be of paramount importance.²⁰⁴

The language used in the cited passage²⁰⁵ makes direct reference to the very same language by which friendship has been defined by Aristotle. But notice the difference; love of God precedes love of neighbor. The love by which we love our neighbor flows out of our love for God so that as we seek God's friendship for ourselves, we seek it for our neighbors also.

In the parable of the *Good Samaritan*, "Jesus extends the term 'neighbor' [until it is essentially synonymous with] mankind."²⁰⁶ The priest and the Levite were justified [by Israel's purity laws]²⁰⁷ in passing up the poor assault-victim on the road. So, in a sense, they weren't doing wrong in their own minds. They may not have even had their conscience pricking them to act, since doing what might seem to us to be the right thing would have violated their laws.²⁰⁸ But by broadening the boundaries of the term "neighbor" Jesus now compels us to see each person as an "other self."

dream fulfilled for the present nor is it in vain." William J. Hoye, "Human Love as Unfulfilling Union According to St. Thomas Aquinas." (*Schwerpunkt: Systematische Theologie, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Theologischen Anthropologie*, <http://hoye.de/aq/love.pdf>): 8.

²⁰⁴ *Gaudium et Spes*, 24

²⁰⁵ Romans 13:9-10; cf. 1 John 4:20

²⁰⁶ Katharine Doob Sakenfeld. *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2006) 535.

²⁰⁷ Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18

²⁰⁸ Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch. *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible New Testament*. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010). 129 (footnote for Luke 10:27).

To love the “other” as you love your-*self* is the kind of love that Aristotle defines as reciprocated in true *friendship*. It is the kind of friendship he claims is very rare and only possible between the virtuous.²⁰⁹ But to actually *be* friendship that love must also be both reciprocated and communicated. Yet, the Lord asks us to extend this love to others as freely as the Samaritan in His parable did. It is crucial to notice that what Jesus is doing is commanding His followers to imitate divine love—which extends *benevolence* regardless of how it is received.

Both the love of neighbor and the love of God fall under the domain of charity. Charity is “a theological virtue that causes us to love God above all things, for His own sake, in the way in which He loves Himself, and to love the neighbor for God’s sake.”²¹⁰ The two objects of this virtue are God and one’s neighbor. Now, one cannot have the fullness of friendship with several other persons in the sense of loving each of those persons for their own sakes; human creatures are limited. Yet, the command of Jesus Christ to extend this radical form of friendship to our neighbors—essentially to all people—is facilitated by loving our neighbors *for the sake of God*.²¹¹ In this way, we authentically love *friends, acquaintances, strangers*—and even *enemies*—for God’s sake.

If love of God precedes love of neighbor and the love that we extend to other humans is extended for the sake of our love for God, then this reality has significant implications on the relationship of spousal friendship. It is precisely by loving one’s spouse for God’s sake that he most perfectly loves the other spouse. Yet, this requires that a relationship of friendship exists

²⁰⁹ Aristotle, 1156b

²¹⁰ Tanqueray, 568; cf. Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, 131

²¹¹ cf. Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, 133

between that individual and God. At least for the most intimate manifestation of a relationship of spousal friendship, then, it is necessary that each foster an intimate friendship with God.²¹²

In light of these realities, we can more fully appreciate the 24th paragraph of *Gaudium et Spes*:

Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, "that all may be one. . . as we are one" (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God's sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.²¹³

God has placed within us something of Himself—the image of God—by which we only truly experience flourishing through self-gift. This gift of self is characteristic of the love by which God loves from all eternity. We are called to imitate the Triune relationship of total self-gift made in love by extending that love to our neighbor—essential to the entire human family. It is through the loving exchange of total self-gift that unity becomes possible from a multiplicity of persons. All persons are called to imitate this divine love. Yet, in a special way, married persons imitate the Triune love in the mutual exchange of *betrothed-love*. The most perfect way by which spouses can manifest betrothed love, as is indicated by the above discussion of the nature of love, is for each spouse to love the other and to make a total gift of self to the other for the very sake of their love for God for His own sake. This is why marriage is a vocation.

²¹² Of course, if the most intimate manifestation of a relationship of spousal friendship is possible for the spouses only by fostering intimate relationships of friendship with God, then it follows that only Christians are capable of the most intimate manifestations of spousal friendship. Now, this is not to say that non-Christian spouses cannot have friendships with one another that are genuinely intimate. But it does entail that Christians are capable—by virtue of their intimacy with God Himself—to be caught up in an objectively deeper friendship with their spouses.

²¹³ *Gaudium et Spes*, 24

Friendship with God sustains spousal friendship

By imitating divine love, we become more like God. This is ultimately the end to which our actions direct us when we pursue our truest happiness: to become like God. Yet, the effects of the sin of Adam and Eve remain as an obstacle to attaining that end. By taking the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve refused to acknowledge God's sovereignty over them as creatures before their Creator—who determines what is good and what is evil. Instead, they sought the power proper only to the Creator and rejected the objective order established by God. In all of this, they refused obedience.

Becoming more like God is intrinsic to our flourishing. But Adam and Eve grasped at divinity rather than awaiting the reception of it from God as a divine gift that would have made them like obedient children before their loving God, like Jesus Christ who did not grasp at divinity but was obedient even unto death.²¹⁴ By this grasping, Man “chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of creaturely status and therefore against his own good.”²¹⁵ As a consequence of this choice, our first parents transmitted a wounded nature on to their descendants which is deprived of original holiness.²¹⁶ For this reason, we must now purify our love so that it more fully reflects divine love.

²¹⁴ cf. “Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:5b-8, RSV).

²¹⁵ Catholic Church, 398

²¹⁶ cf. Catholic Church, 417, 419

The purification of eros

Modern secular culture has poisoned *eros* love through the exultation of sensual pleasure.²¹⁷ By examining the concept of *eros* as it is understood and as it has been understood through the ages, Pope Benedict XVI identified two things about the nature of *eros* love in his encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*:

First, there is a certain relationship between love and the Divine: love promises infinity, eternity—a reality far greater and totally other than our everyday existence. Yet we have also seen that the way to attain this goal is not simply by submitting to instinct. Purification and growth in maturity are called for; and these also pass through the path of renunciation. Far from rejecting or “poisoning” *eros*, they heal it and restore its true grandeur.²¹⁸

Through *purification* and *growth in maturity*, the grandeur of *eros* love is restored. From the creation accounts of Genesis, we know that “*eros* is somehow rooted in man’s very nature.”²¹⁹ But Benedict argues that a second crucial point can be seen in the Genesis account. The account shows that *eros* love directs the man and woman toward marriage and in marriage it fulfills its deepest purpose. He writes:

From the standpoint of creation, *eros* directs man towards marriage, to a bond which is unique and definitive; thus, and only thus, does it fulfil its deepest purpose. Corresponding to the image of a monotheistic God is monogamous marriage. Marriage based on exclusive and definitive love becomes the icon of the relationship between God and his people and vice versa. God's way of loving becomes the measure of human love. This close connection between *eros* and marriage in the Bible has practically no equivalent in extra-biblical literature.²²⁰

Thus, as the couple purifies the expression of *eros* love in their marriage, they increasingly imitate divine love more perfectly. Through this purification, the image of God expressed by

²¹⁷ Walter Schu. “Benedict XVI Saves Eros.” *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*(April 2007) 10-11; cf. Benedict, 3, 5

²¹⁸ Benedict XVI, 5

²¹⁹ Benedict XVI, 11

²²⁰ Benedict XVI, 11

that love is more perfectly manifest in their relationship with one another. This reality is significant for the flourishing of both spouses. But its importance also extends to their children and other friends and family with whom they are in relationship, since the exclusivity expressed in *eros* love reveals the image of God's oneness and reflects the relationship between God and His people.

But how is the purification of *eros* love accomplished? While *eros* love is purified through *agape* love, Fr. Stephen Brett argues that *philia* love—the love of friendship—facilitates the proper environment for that purification and the exercise of *eros* love.²²¹ Within the context of their mutual extension of benevolence (characteristic of friendship), the spouses find themselves in a safe environment in which their mutual vulnerability and care for one another facilitates the purification needed for their love to more purely mirror the love of God. But friendship with God specifically facilitates the friendship of spouses since (as even the ancient philosophers believed of friendship) the friend becomes like his friend, and, to be more like God is to be more capable of entering into the kind of benevolent love characteristic of friendship. In *Deus Caritas Est*, Benedict goes on to say:

Earlier we spoke of the process of purification and maturation by which *eros* comes fully into its own, becomes love in the full meaning of the word. It is characteristic of mature love that it calls into play all man's potentialities; it engages the whole man, so to speak. Contact with the visible manifestations of God's love can awaken within us a feeling of joy born of the experience of being loved. But this encounter also engages our will and our intellect. Acknowledgment of the living God is one path towards love, and the "yes" of our will to his will unites our intellect, will and sentiments in the all- embracing act of love. But this process is always open-ended; love is never "finished" and complete; throughout life, it changes and matures, and thus remains faithful

²²¹ Brett writes that: "Any experience of *eros* that jeopardizes or betrays authentic friendship demeans and distorts the life of the subject. It is *philia* that prevents *eros* from becoming, paradoxically, an amorphous abstraction. *Philia* provides parameters of authenticity (for instance, virtue, benevolence, a mutual search for a real good, reciprocal communication, and a measure of equality) that characterize *eros* at its finest, on the ascent to *agape*, rather than at its nadir, prepared to descend into lust. Apart from Christian revelation, Aristotle correctly linked friendship with happiness" (Brett, 16).

to itself. *Idem velle atque idem nolle* (Sallust, *De coniuratione Catilinae*, XX, 4.)—to want the same thing, and to reject the same thing—was recognized by antiquity as the authentic content of love: the one becomes similar to the other, and this leads to a community of will and thought. The love-story between God and man consists in the very fact that this communion of will increases in a communion of thought and sentiment, and thus our will and God's will increasingly coincide: God's will is no longer for me an alien will, something imposed on me from without by the commandments, but it is now my own will, based on the realization that God is in fact more deeply present to me than I am to myself (cf. Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, III, 6, 11: CCL 27, 32.). Then self- abandonment to God increases and God becomes our joy (cf. *Ps* 73 [72]:23-28).²²²

This process of purification is a lifelong process; it is also a life-changing process. The purification of *eros* is a lifelong process because love does not come to an end; rather, it changes, matures, and therefore keeps the process “open ended.” But it is also a life-changing process because it entails a transformation—an elevation—of our creaturely wills to greater conformity with the divine will. As friends become like one another, so through the purification of *eros* love we gradually take on, more and more, the *will* and *thought* of God. This is the nature of the communion of will Benedict references. Just as friends delight to become similar to one another, through abandoning ourselves and our rebellious wills to God, we actually begin to delight in God in an intimate way.²²³

The citation of Augustine's *Confessions* is very telling. That God would be more deeply present in the individual than that individual is in himself demonstrates the destructive nature of sin in the life of the person—that by sinning the individual become less of his own true self. Yet,

²²² Benedict XVI, 17

²²³ As Benedict says in the following paragraph: “Only my readiness to encounter my neighbor and to show him love makes me sensitive to God as well. Only if I serve my neighbor can my eyes be opened to what God does for me and how much he loves me... Love of God and love of neighbor are thus inseparable, they form a single commandment. But both live from the love of God who has loved us first. No longer is it a question, then, of a ‘commandment’ imposed from without and calling for the impossible, but rather of a freely-bestowed experience of love from within, a love which by its very nature must then be shared with others. Love grows through love” (Benedict XVI, 18).

despite the presence of corruption and disorder, God has placed within us a profound desire for the transcendent by which we are compelled toward the *truth* and all that is truly *good*. Although one may still choose against our deepest desires, they will continue to tug at the heart and challenge the direction of his life until he experiences the transformation needed to reorient himself back to God.

Marriage as a vocation

Christian marriage is a vocation.²²⁴ It is the specific path discerned and chosen by the spouses through which they strive toward heaven.²²⁵ But marriage is also a sacrament;²²⁶ it supplies special graces to the spouses for living their vocation well. These sanctifying graces help the spouses to live in right relationship with one another and with God.²²⁷

The love of spouses is not reducible to a sensual desire; it entails a firm commitment of the will to persevere in love through good times and bad—even when sensual desires seem far

²²⁴ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that “the vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator.” Catholic Church, 1603.

²²⁵ Since it has a role in God’s eternal plan, “marriage is already holy as a human reality.” A. G. Martimort. *The Church at Prayer Volume III: The Sacraments*. (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1988) 206.

²²⁶ In New Testament times, “Jesus performed His first sign at a wedding feast (Jn 2:1-11), henceforth Marriage was to be ‘an efficacious sign of Christ’s presence.’ It was thus raised to the dignity of a sacrament, for Christ has come to perfect the order of creation, and grace builds on nature. Therefore, Christ restored Marriage to its original purity, and bestowed the grace to carry out the demands which this involves.” Paul Haffner. *The Sacramental Mystery*. (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2008) 236.

²²⁷ “This grace proper to the sacrament of Matrimony is intended to perfect the couple’s love and to strengthen their indissoluble unity. By this grace, they help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children” (Haffner, 254; cf. Catholic Church, 1641).

removed from the spousal experience.²²⁸ This love is a reflection of God's love; but since they are imitating divine love while they are themselves disordered by sin, the couples need the graces accompanying the sacrament to sustain their commitment. By maintaining genuine friendship with God, the spouses remain close to the source which their own love must imitate to be pure. But as friends, the spouses ought to mutually desire the other to have deep friendship with God and to live in right relationship with Him.²²⁹ Through the lens of this friendship, they can make sense of the Pauline passage from Ephesians 5:

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church; however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.²³⁰

Husbands and wives are called to mutual subjection in imitation of the love of Jesus Christ for His Church. The love with which Jesus Christ Himself loved is the example they are called to imitate in loving one another; Jesus loved the Church literally *unto death*. Therefore, husbands

²²⁸ Dietrich Von Hildebrand writes that: "Marriage is a reality in the objective order which is constituted only by a solemn act and presupposes a formal act of the will: the two partners give themselves expressly to each other, fully sanctioning this surrender for their entire lifetime" (Von Hildebrand, 21-22).

²²⁹ As was mentioned in the previous chapter of this essay, McNamara finds that there are four characteristics of Augustine's fundamentally Christian version of friendship that develop out of the Pagan ethos: (1) that God is Himself the author of friendship and the one who enables us to enter into this kind of relationship; (2) friendships will find true stability only in Him; (3) the friendship of Christians is transformed through grace, surpassing the ideals of Pagan friendship such that the good pursued is supernaturally virtue and eternal beatitude; (4) friendship is not perfected in this life, but in the life to come (cf. McNamara, 196-197).

²³⁰ Ephesians 5:21-33

and wives are commanded by Jesus *to lay down their lives in love* for the other. About midway through this passage, Paul even uses the language of benevolent love—reminiscent of Aristotle and Aquinas’ definitions of friendship—for the relationship that the spouses must have for one another. Thus, it is through their love for one another that they imitate the love of Christ; it is through their love of Christ that they have the strength to imitate His love.²³¹

The language of the *mutual* subjectivity of husbands and wives is a Gospel reality. When, in the 19th chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is approached by the Pharisees about whether it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife *for any cause*, Jesus defends the sanctity of marriage by arguing that, “from the beginning it was not so” (Matthew, 19:8, RSV). Jesus’ argument to the Pharisees began with the Genesis account of the creation of Man as male and female, and that by the union of man and woman, the two become one flesh.²³²

Certain things—fully human things—are distinctly expressed in either the masculine or feminine expressions of humanity that are not present in the other; this is a fact. For example, men do not naturally have a womb in which to carry a child—the sexual organs of man and woman are different. The differences between man and woman have led some to believe that an inequality exists between men and women. The language of mutual subjectivity would seem to suggest—at least to modern secular readers—that Christianity itself is proposing such an inequality between husbands and wives. Although the inequality of men and women may have seemed to be a matter of fact in the ancient world, it is not at all what is being argued for by Christianity in the Pauline text to the Ephesians.

²³¹ cf. Saint Francis De Sales, 160-161

²³² cf. Matthew 19:4-5

Even the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle believed that there was an inequality between men and women. Yet, he also believed that friendship was possible between spouses.²³³ Thus, he located the relationship of spousal friendship within the domain of relationships of inequality—where a superior (the man in this case) essentially humbles himself to facilitate the equality needed for friendship with his inferior (the woman in this case).²³⁴ Friendships between a superior and an inferior require that the superior be of superior virtue if there is to be equality in the friendship.²³⁵ The greater portion of virtue possessed by one party allows friendship to form between him and the one inferior to him in virtue. In these relationships, the goods exchanged between parties are not identical; each party exercises a different virtue and a different function, and the causes of love between each vary as well.²³⁶ Yet, while Aristotle manages to argue for the possibility of friendship between men and women as a relationship of

²³³ Aristotle, 1158b

²³⁴ The inequality specifically of man and woman—due to the alleged inferiority of the female sex—leads Aristotle to place men and women into the category of inequality. However, this does not seem to inhibit the spousal relationship from being a friendship of virtue. Fullam writes that “While marriage is not a subject of special attention for Aristotle, he recognizes that marriage may be a friendship of virtue, even though the spouses are unequal from the outset. Due to his faulty moral anthropology of natural male superiority, he does not consider whether (opposite-sex) spouses might offset each other’s weaknesses mutually – such equality is more a matter of male-male (or female-female) relationships only. But virtue is forged in friendship” (Fullam, 667).

To the contrary of Aristotle’s misconception about the inequality of men and women, Saint John Paul II wrote in *Mulieris Dignitatem* that, “Christ’s attitude to women confirms and clarifies, in the Holy Spirit, the truth about the equality of man and woman. One must speak of an essential ‘equality’, since both of them - the woman as much as the man - are created in the image and likeness of God. Both of them are equally capable of receiving the outpouring of divine truth and love in the Holy Spirit. Both receive his salvific and sanctifying ‘visits.’” (*Mulieris Dignitatem*, 16).

²³⁵ “Friendship...consists more in loving; and people who love their friends are praised; hence, it would seem, loving is the virtue of friends. And so friends whose love corresponds to their friends’ worth are enduring friends and have an enduring friendship. This above all is the way for unequals as well as equals to be friends, since this is the way for them to be equalized” (Aristotle, 1159a-1159b).

²³⁶ cf. Aristotle, 1158b

inequality, the distinctively Christian contribution made to the present discussion is that spouses may enter into a relationship of friendship as *equals*.

In the book of Genesis, God created the human race male and female and saw that what He had made was “very good.”²³⁷ In his book *On the Good of Marriage*, Saint Augustine explained that the very fact that Eve was made from Adam’s side indicates their equality.²³⁸ It should be noted that Augustine was reading Genesis as a Christian informed by the Gospel.²³⁹ That same Gospel informed Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (cited above) as well as Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*. He writes that:

The biblical description in the Book of Genesis outlines the truth about the consequences of man's sin, as it is shown by *the disturbance* of that original *relationship between man and woman* which corresponds to their individual dignity as persons. A human being, whether male or female, is a person, and therefore, "the only creature on earth which God willed for its own sake"; and at the same time this unique and unrepeatable creature "cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self". Here begins the relationship of "communion" in which the "unity of the two" and the personal dignity of both man and woman find expression.²⁴⁰

That Man’s personal dignity is experienced through the relationship of communion and unity is very much like what has been argued earlier in this essay. Human creatures are social creatures.

A human life without interpersonal exchange is a life that suffers a grave privation. Yet, John

²³⁷ Genesis 1:31, RSV

²³⁸ cf. Genesis 2:21-22; Augustine writes that “even [man and wife] God did not create as separate individuals and then unite them as strangers by birth, but he fashioned the wife from the husband, and signaled the strength of their union by the flank from which she was drawn and formed; for those who walk together, and together observe the direction which they are taking, are joined side by side in unity. The next link in the chain of community is children, the sole worthy outcome not of the union between male and female, but of sexual intercourse; for even without such sexual association there could exist a true union of friendship between the two sexes, with the one governing and the other obeying.” Augustine, *De Bono Coniugali*, 3

²³⁹ Another instance where Jesus spoke of the sanctity of marriage is drawn from Luke’s Gospel: “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery” (Luke 16:18, RSV). Similarly, in Matthew 5:28 Jesus tells His hearers that anyone who even looks with lust at a woman has already committed the sin of adultery with her in his heart.

²⁴⁰ John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 10

Paul II is here writing specifically of the exchange between spouses. In virtue of the two being male and female, a potential for unity exists through which the two become one. In the context of this interpersonal communion, the woman and man offer one another a total gift of self.

This passage also speaks of man and woman each as full participants in the dignity of persons. It is by each making a sincere gift of self that the *personal subjectivity* of each is both respected and perfected. Yet, he also notes that sin has a negative influence on the spousal relationship.²⁴¹ The equality of the spouses is attacked by sinful inclinations. Still, this equality is essential to the reciprocity of love exchanged in spousal friendship. To this end, John Paul II writes that “Gospel ‘equality’, the ‘equality’ of women and men in regard to the ‘mighty works of God’—manifested so clearly in the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth—constitutes the most obvious basis for the dignity and vocation of women in the Church and in the world.”²⁴² The dynamic nature of this equality is a crucial theme emphasized in the Gospels. John Paul II even goes so far as to call it *the basis for the dignity and vocation of women*.

²⁴¹ John Paul II writes that: “This statement in Genesis 3:16 is of great significance. It implies a reference to the mutual relationship of man and woman *in marriage*. It refers to the desire born in the atmosphere of spousal love whereby the woman's "sincere gift of self" is responded to and matched by a corresponding "gift" on the part of the husband. Only on the basis of this principle can both of them, and in particular the woman, "discover themselves" as a true "unity of the two" according to the dignity of the person. The matrimonial union requires respect for and a perfecting of the true personal subjectivity of both of them. *The woman cannot become the "object" of "domination" and male "possession"*. But the words of the biblical text directly concern original sin and its lasting consequences in man and woman. Burdened by hereditary sinfulness, they bear within themselves the constant "*inclination to sin*", the tendency to go against the moral order which corresponds to the rational nature and dignity of man and woman as persons. This tendency is expressed in *a threefold concupiscence*, which Saint John defines as the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life (cf. 1 Jn 2:16). The words of the Book of Genesis quoted previously (3: 16) show how this threefold concupiscence, the "*inclination to sin*", will burden the mutual relationship of man and woman.” John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 10.

²⁴² John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 16

Yet, difference still seems to intuitively entail inequality. It must at least entail some variation through which one thing is unique from another. Difference within the human race has led to the imposition of many unjust practices believed to be rooted in *inequalities* between various ethnic or religious groups or even among men and women. Yet, can there be an *equality of difference*? In her article “Equality, Gender, and John Paul II” Dr. Mary Lemmons argues that there is.²⁴³ While difference entails a variation of expression, it does not necessarily presuppose a qualitative disparity between things or persons participating in the same genus.²⁴⁴ There is, for instance, a sense in which Beethoven and Michelangelo share an equality that is based upon a commonality of excellence—though the excellence is analogous—by which each artist is a master of his discipline of *art*: music and painting.²⁴⁵ Lemmons writes that:

[The] human mission to love in the image of the Trinity bestows upon femininity and masculinity their proper meanings: the meaning of femininity is to facilitate woman’s ability to enter into relationships of fruitful love and unity between equals; the meaning of masculinity is likewise to facilitate man’s ability to enter into relationships of fruitful love and unity between equals. Sexuality is for facilitating a Trinitarian-like love.²⁴⁶

The reality is that sex matters—human masculinity and femininity offer distinct—though equal—contributions to love and relationship. Lemmons articulates three ways by which spousal unification in love images the triune God: (1) “by being a unit constituted by love; (2) by being a fecund unit that is not closed in on itself but is turned outward in the brining forth of new life;

²⁴³ Lemmons, “Equality, Gender, and John Paul II,” 111

²⁴⁴ Lemmons writes that: “On the one hand, it does not seem possible for the different to be equal, because the different—as such—lack some commonality whereby they can be compared and known as equal, or even as inferior/ superior. Accordingly, ‘an equality of difference’ would be oxymoronic, if it did not presuppose some type of commonality whereby comparisons could be made” (Lemmons, “Equality, Gender, and John Paul II,” 111).

²⁴⁵ cf. Lemmons, “Equality, Gender, and John Paul II,” 112; Lemmons writes: “since their excellences are different, their equality is analogical” (Lemmons, “Equality, Gender, and John Paul II,” 112).

²⁴⁶ Lemmons, “Equality, Gender, and John Paul II,” 113

and (3) by being a unit of *distinct* equals.”²⁴⁷ *As a unit constituted by love*, the spousal exchange of betrothed love within the context of marriage imitates the total self-gift made and renewed by the divine Persons of the Trinity at every moment for all eternity. The fecundity of marriage is itself a fruit of the salvific mission of Jesus Christ whereby He repairs the damage Original Sin caused to the dispositions of men and women to one another;²⁴⁸ fruitful love extends itself freely to the other and does not turn in upon itself.²⁴⁹ By virtue of their distinction, the man and woman reflect the very distinctiveness of the Persons of the Trinity; by their equality, they reflect the common divinity of all three Persons of the Trinity.

²⁴⁷ Lemmons, “Equality, Gender, and John Paul II,” 113

²⁴⁸ Later on in the same article, Lemmons writes that: “It is only Jesus Christ, who is able to heal—by His life and by His grace—the rift between men and women that obscured the ability of both men and women to see the true dignity and equality of each other and, thereby, to enter into paired relationships of love that image the Trinity. Love is best between equals, teaches the Trinity. Thus, Jesus Christ—by restoring the equality of woman with man and by liberating woman from her own enslaving desires—enables the sexes to be equal love-gifts for each other. Jesus Christ thus made it possible for men and women to lay down their lives in love—without compromising their equality, sexuality, or dignity. As a result, sexual gender roles can now be empowering by bringing their participants into the greatest mysteries of joyful love” (Lemmons, “Equality, Gender and John Paul II,” 121-122).

²⁴⁹ cf. Genesis 3:16 wherein we are told that Original Sin damages the inclinations of spouses toward one another. Through sin, the husband becomes inclined to dominate his wife; similarly, through sin the wife’s tendency toward her husband becomes an inwardly focused expression of love through which she submits to his lordship over her. Neither of these inclinations reflects the good for which we were made, nor do they imitate the love by which God loves (cf. Lemmons, “Equality, Gender, and John Paul II,” 115).

Mutual submission and resignation of the will

Recalling the role of spousal friendship in facilitating betrothed love and helping it to flourish reminds us of the difficulties involved in such a union. It is clear that the total self-gift exchanged in betrothal is confronted by dangers from without and within.²⁵⁰ Even the spouses themselves are affected by Original Sin. Yet, the two are entrusted by their Creator to one another and called to reflect His image more intimately through the purification and mutual exchange of their love.²⁵¹

By virtue of the exchange of their total self-gift through betrothed love, the spouses reflect the very image of God's love for Mankind. It is, however, also part of God's command to husbands and wives to love one another as Jesus Christ loved the Church, as was described in the previous chapter of this essay. The love of Jesus Christ is both the model to be imitated and the medium through which the imitation is accomplished. Jesus Christ made a total gift of Himself for love of the Church out of loving obedience to God His Father.²⁵² The obedience of Jesus Christ to God the Father was not an expression of slavish subjection of an inferior to his superior; it did not arise from slavish servitude, but from love. The Father and Jesus Christ were

²⁵⁰ The statistics listed in the Introduction to this essay give empirical evidence of these dangers.

²⁵¹ John Paul II addresses this reality as he reflects on the scene from John's Gospel where an adulterous woman is brought before Jesus to test Him. "The woman was entrusted to the man... The man was also entrusted by the Creator to the woman - they were *entrusted to each other as persons* made in the image and likeness of God himself. This entrusting is the test of love, spousal love. In order to become "a sincere gift" to one another, each of them has to feel responsible for the gift. This test is meant for both of them - man and woman - from the "beginning". After original sin, contrary forces are at work in man and woman as a result of the threefold concupiscence, the "stimulus of sin". They act from deep within the human being." John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 14

²⁵² cf. Philippians 2:6-8; Hebrews 5:8; Galatians 1:3-4; John 17

one in will through their mutual love for one another. As Archbishop Fulton Sheen once wrote, “obedience is servility only to those who have not understood the spontaneity of love.”²⁵³

Summary

Therefore, friendship with God protects spousal friendship; it helps both of the spouses to live their own spousal relationship better since it is the benevolent love of God that they are called to imitate in their own vocational calling. Friendship with God may also become *the good* willed by the spouses for themselves and for one another. While friendship with God is not a prerequisite to spousal friendship, it is, nevertheless, the medium through which each spouse can attain his own ultimate flourishing.

²⁵³ Archbishop Fulton Sheen wrote of the nature of obedience in his book *The World's First Love*. He says: “Obedience does not mean the execution of orders that are given by a drill sergeant. It springs, rather, from the love of an order, and love of Him who gave it. The merit of obedience is less in the act than in the love; the submission, the devotion, and the service which obedience implies are not born of servitude, but are rather effects that spring from and are unified by love. Obedience is servility only to those who have not understood the spontaneity of love” (Sheen, 84).

Conclusion

This essay sought to explore whether or not friendship is necessary for the spousal relationship or if romantic passion suffices. A relationship of romantic passion, it has been argued, is an insubstantial context for the marital commitment; it is a kind of relationship which tends toward disintegration by reducing the spouse to the mere *means* and not an *end* in him/her-self. The kind of intimate relationship that safeguards the dignity of both persons—acknowledging that they are not merely means but subjects who pursue ends themselves—is friendship. Therefore, it was then argued that friendship is necessary for marriage. It is within spousal friendship that the good of the each spouse is willed for his own sake. The final argument made in this essay was that friendship with God plays a crucial role in protecting spousal friendship. While spousal friendship is possible without the spouses pursuing a deliberately intimate relationship with God, the deepest and most intimate friendship of the spouses is not possible except when the spouses are also friends of God. Through this friendship with God, each spouse is able to more perfectly love the other as God loves—since the love that they express to one another is a reflection of the love between the Persons of the Trinity, this perfection of love through relationship with God greatly aids their mutual goal.

Friendship, thus, is necessary for marriage. But even the friendship of the spouses points and guides them toward relationship with God. Becoming more like God is the ultimate end of all human life. Each person has a specific vocation through which he is drawn by God toward a communion that alone can satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart. Spousal friendship facilitates the expression of the love characteristic of married life (betrothed love) through which spouses are caught up in imitation of the divine exchange of total self-gift. It is in this way that those who live the vocation of married life sojourn through the world to God. While the ideal is often difficult to faithfully live, through spousal friendship the spouses can rely upon the mutual help exchanged with one another in their journey.

A closer look at the arguments of this essay

In the first chapter of this essay, three reasons have been offered as to why romantic passion cannot alone sustain the spousal relationship. The first is that romantic passion is based on sensuality or sentimentality and these constitute friendships of pleasure or utility which necessarily change over time, as Aristotle points out. The second reason is that relationships based solely on romantic passion permit the objectification of the other that dehumanizes the other, as Pope Benedict XVI points out. The third reason is that relationships merely of romantic passion lack the personal character of love whereby spouses help each other to grow in virtue, as Pope Pius XI points out.

The second chapter of this essay has argued that friendship is indeed crucial to the spousal relationship for two reasons. The first is to prevent disintegration because the harms of the first chapter of this essay are avoided only by willing the other's good in friendship. The

second reason is to facilitate the growth and flourishing of betrothed love, which is a deeper expression of love toward which marriage is ordered (and which imitates the very love by which God loves us) insofar as it is the proper context for the fruitful expression of romantic passion. Therefore, given the importance of friendship to the relationship of the spouses and their good, it is necessary for marriage.

The argument of the third chapter of this essay has proposed three reasons why spousal friendship is protected by friendship with God. The first is that the love of God enables spouses to purify their love for one another. The second reason is because divinely bestowed grace facilitates the purification of *eros* and because the very love of Jesus Christ enables the spouses to have the strength to imitate His love. The third reason is that the love of God is itself the image imitated by the mutual subjection of betrothed love (cf. Ephesians 5:21-33) and the spouses learn the nature of this love through their friendship with God in conjunction with their own spousal friendship.

Summary

Therefore, this essay has argued for two kinds of friendship within the marital relationship: spousal friendship and friendship with God. The first was argued to be essential to marriage. The second, while not strictly essential to the role of preserving spousal friendship, was argued to be crucial to the flourishing of the couple both individually and together. To put the entire thesis essay succinctly: the *first* chapter has argued that romantic passion alone is insufficient for marriage; the *second* chapter has argued that the friendship of spouses is necessary; the *third* chapter has argued that friendship with God is important both individually and collectively: for

each person to form a properly integrated self, and for the spouses together to sustain the love and intimacy of their spousal friendship.

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