

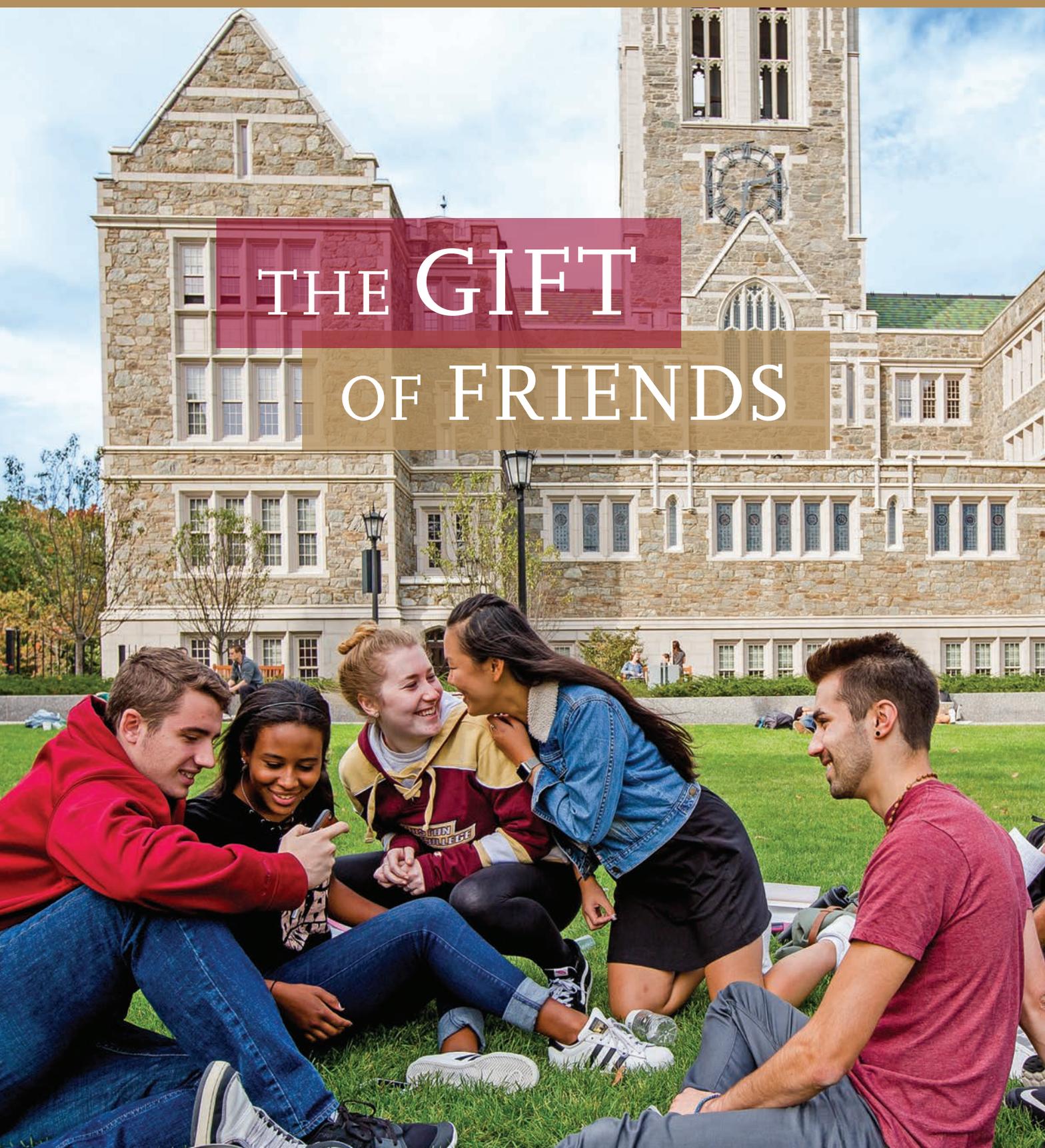
BOSTON COLLEGE



C21 RESOURCES

THE CHURCH IN THE 21ST CENTURY CENTER

SPRING 2018

A group of five young adults (three women and two men) are sitting on a green lawn in front of a large, multi-story stone building with Gothic architectural features. They are all smiling and appear to be in conversation. One man on the left is wearing a red hoodie, and another man on the right is wearing a maroon t-shirt. The women are wearing a mix of casual clothing, including a denim jacket and a maroon and gold hoodie. The background building has a prominent stone tower with a clock face and arched windows.

THE GIFT OF FRIENDS



ON THE COVER

BC students on the lawn behind Gasson Hall.

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The Church in the 21st Century Center is a catalyst and resource for the renewal of the Catholic Church.

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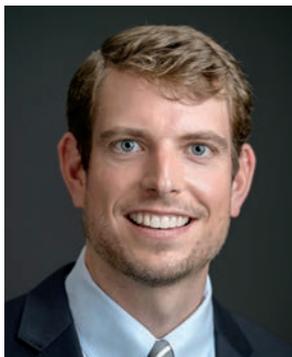
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Guest Editor C21 Resources Spring 2018

TIMOTHY HANCHIN is the guest editor of this issue of *C21 Resources*. He is an assistant professor in the theology and religious studies department at Villanova University. Hanchin also serves as director of the Theological Education Formation Program, an integral Augustinian component of Villanova's doctoral program in theology. He received his PhD in theology and education from Boston College. His research addresses the philosophy of Catholic education, theological pedagogy, and the work of Bernard Lonergan, S.J.

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OUR BEST FRIEND

“My grandmother revealed to me that we most exercise our friendship with a divine person in worship, and our friendship with God is reflected in our friendships with one another.”

— Timothy Hanchin

IN THE FIRST LETTER OF ST. JOHN, we read this extraordinary three-word description of God: It boldly states, “God is love” (1 John 4:8). This is the cumulative punchline to God’s self-disclosure over the previous 2,000 years, first to the Israelites and then in God’s own Son, Jesus, the Christ. The Hebrew Scriptures reveal many attributes of God—of mercy, justice, loving kindness, compassion, graciousness, and so on. Now, encouraged by the teachings of Jesus, John summarizes “God is love.” And to say God *is love* is to say that God *is in love*—with us.

Note well the Greek term here is *agape*. So God is love toward us with the fullest form of altruistic love. God does not love us because we earn or deserve it, but out of infinite generosity. And God continues to love us unconditionally—even if we don’t return God’s love. There is literally nothing we can do to stop God from loving us.

From ancient times, philosophers have also recognized this kind of *agapaic* love as the highest form of friendship. It is not based on utility, nor on familial relationships, nor on *eros*. It is love, pure and simple, given without deserving or even expecting return. That God is infinite *agape* toward us means God is our best friend.

The first part of 1 John 4:8 is the clue to how we are to respond and live into our friendship with God. The full verse reads, “Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.” In other words, our friendships are precisely how we can come to “know” this God who is love. This could not be otherwise. Created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), we are made to love and be loved. To live without love/friendship negates who we are and blocks us from experiencing God’s love/friendship. As John says a few verses later, “Those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen” (1 John 4:20).

Might our divine friendship prompt us to share our friends with God and God with our friends? We can surely raise up our friends before God, praying for them, asking God to bless them, that we be good friends together. And, as appropriate, why not share our divine friendship with our friends? To witness that God is our best friend can inspire human friends to consider or deepen their own divine friendship.

We thank our guest editor, Timothy Hanchin, a PhD graduate in theology and education from Boston College and now an assistant professor at Villanova University. He has assembled a rich collection of writings on this lovely theme of friendship. Read on!

Professor Thomas Groome
Director, Church in the 21st Century Center

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GRACE AND THE FRAGILITY OF FRIENDSHIP

TIMOTHY HANCHIN

REMEMBER MY grandmother entering the sanctuary of her beloved parish church, St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church of the Assumption in Monessen, Pennsylvania. With a lace doily bobby-pinned to her light grey hair, she approached the gold screen of icons (iconostasis) containing intricate hammered bronze and mosaic images of Christ and the saints. In front of the iconostasis, which separates the nave from the sanctuary, an icon was displayed on a pedestal for veneration. She bowed, crossed herself, and kissed the icon. Above all, I vividly recall my grandmother venerating the icon as one greeting a dear friend.

The Russian Orthodox priest and neomartyr Pavel Florensky describes the glowing iconostasis as a chorus of holy friends who elevate our feeble participation in the mystery of the most holy Eucharist. The holy witness of these friends guides our pilgrimage as we seek greater union with God. Florensky also notes the icons do not take the place of the living witnesses but point toward them. My grandmother, Margaret, remains a beacon of holiness in my life. I am irrevocably transformed by the intertwining of our lives. Margaret fell asleep in the Lord over a decade ago, but our friendship does not end.

Grace and Friendship

The spiritual practice of icon veneration concretizes the role of grace in Christian friendship. Fr. Michael Himes claims that friendship is often our primary experience of God. I concur, but human friendship is ambiguous. In Book II of his *Confessions*, Augustine recounts stealing bushels of pears from a neighborhood orchard with his teenage companions. Upon reflection, Augustine notes the social influence of the company he kept on his sinful decision. Augustine later arrives at his understanding of true friendship as a bond joined by the gift of the Holy Spirit indwelling in our hearts.

The veneration of the icon acknowledges the Augustinian insight that it is primarily God's grace, not our own willing, that is the source of genuine friendship. This giftedness is the reason why friendship often breaks into our life as a joyous surprise that develops into abiding gratitude. In grieving my grandmother's absence, I am unavoidably reminded I cannot make it on my own. I celebrate the good—not of our own accord but by grace (gift)—reflected in our journeying together toward a common divine end.



In his *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas builds on Augustine's understanding of grace and its correlation with friendship. Aquinas's starting point is the revealed truth of John 15:15: "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."

Aquinas draws upon Aristotle's classic treatment of friendship in his *Nicomachean Ethics* in order to better understand this truth. For Aristotle, friendship consists of mutual relations of benevolence motivated by concern for the other's good. Friendship as benevolence makes no claims on the other, and it does not desire to possess the other. In addition to well-wishing, friendship involves the mutual sharing of concrete goods.

Aristotle barred friendship between humans and the gods, because the radical asymmetry undermines the requisite mutuality. However, for people of Christian faith, in the incarnation the Word is made flesh; Jesus is made equal to humans and mediates divine love to us. Continuing God's saving work in Jesus, the Holy Spirit flooding our hearts "elevates" our human nature so we can receive our divine friend as divine. In the light of faith, the incarnation and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit comprise a divine communication or sharing that establishes new relations with humanity.

What God "communicates" to us is the *koinonia* or fellowship functioning as the divine life between the Trinity's Persons. We can thereby participate in

the relations of divine friendship that is both the inward and the outbound life of our triune God. In other words, we become related to God as God is related to God, participating in the divine three-way friendship that is the Blessed Trinity.

Our Divided Times

The fragility of human friendship is made plain in our deeply divided times. Interpersonal relations in the Church and the public square grow increasingly polarized and tribal. Cardinal Sean O'Malley describes the current state of polarization as "a cancer."

This tragically appropriate metaphor applied to the Body of Christ suggests neuralgia resulting from the deep-seated and chronic failure of people of faith to disagree with each other in charity. Pope Francis similarly decries a "virus of polarization." In physics, polarization refers to particles or forces repelling one another as in the case of opposed poles of a bar magnet, whereby attraction to one pole occurs as the repulsion to the other. Polarization in Church or society, distinct from conflict, rules out meaningful engagement and therefore friendship.

The tribalism of the public square incapacitates government and disillusion voters. According to the Pew Research Center, partisan antipathy is deeper and more extensive than at any point in the last two decades. The rise of ideological uniformity results in more negative views of the opposing political party, including fear, anger, and contempt. Growing numbers see the opposing party as a

threat to the nation's well-being. That most members of both major political parties now hold the opposition in contempt indicates the enormous challenge our current political climate presents to flourishing friendships across the partisan divide. Online, our virtual identities have the potential to exacerbate the divisions marking the Church and the public square.

Our Hope in Divine Friendship

According to Aristotle, friends are drawn together by sharing a common goal or end. Such sharing has more to do with intention than agreement. Indeed, friendship models the way to sustaining relationships amid difficult disagreement. Yet even authentic human friendships are precarious and at times falter. It is the grace of divine friendship that overcomes our interpersonal brokenness and heals division. Our hope rests in a divine person who laid down his life for his friends so their hearts may be converted toward friendship with God. My grandmother revealed to me that we most exercise our friendship with a divine person in worship, and our friendship with God is reflected in our friendships with one another. May this collection of essays aid all of us in experiencing God's grace of friendship. ■

TIMOTHY HANCHIN is the guest editor of this issue of *C21 Resources*.

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 2: The Trinity of Roublev, c1411. Artist: Andrey Rublyov. Photo by Art Media/Print Collection/Getty Images.

God Is Personal

BERNARD COOKE

Perhaps the most basic sacrament of God's saving presence to human life is the sacrament of human love and friendship.

SACRAMENTS ARE MEANT to be a special avenue of insight into the reality of God; they are meant to be words of revelation. And the sacramentality of human love and friendship touches the most basic level of this revelation.

All of this means that our experience of being truly personal with and for another is sacramental; it is a revelation of our humanity at the same time that it is a revelation of God. This experience of human love can make the mystery of divine love for humans credible. On the contrary, if a person does not experience love in his or her life, only with great difficulty can the revelation of divine love be accepted as possible. Learning to trust human love and to trust ourselves to it is the ground for human faith and trust in God.

To say human love is sacramental, especially if one uses that term strictly (as we are doing), implies there is a presence of the beloved in one's consciousness; the deeper and more intimate the love, the more abiding and prominent is the thought of the beloved. To see this as truly sacramental of divine presence means human love does more than make it possible for us to trust God loves us. The human friendships we enjoy embody God's love for us; in and through these friendships God is revealing to us the divine self-giving in love. God is working salvifically in all situations of genuine love, for it is our consciousness of being loved both human and divinely that most leads us to that full personhood that is our destiny.

It is instructive to note that when Jesus, immediately after being baptized by John, was given a special insight into his relationship to God as his *Abba*, the word used in the Gospel to describe his experience of his Father's attitude toward him is the Greek *agapetos*, "my beloved one." This was the awareness of God Jesus had, an awareness of being unconditionally loved, an awareness that became the key to human salvation. And John's Gospel describes Jesus at the Last Supper as extending this to his disciples. "I will not now call you servants, but friends." ■

BERNARD COOKE was an educator and theologian. His scholarship focused on the sacraments and on ministry in the Catholic Church.

PHOTO CREDITS: Page 5: ©Boston College Office of University Communications and ©iStock.com.

This experience of human love can
make the mystery of divine love
for humans credible.



My Yaya: My Grandma, My Friend

MEGAN HEEDER

THIS PAST THANKSGIVING break was the dawn of the realization that my relationship with my grandmother could be considered a friendship, because what I treasured most from vacation was simply being with my grandmother, my Yaya. At some point in my middle school education we discussed how our deepest friendships were those in which we could be quiet and enjoy the gift of being with the other person. The more time I spend with Yaya, the more grateful I become not for the adventures I cherished most as a child—trips to the beach, the amusement park, or our beloved local ice cream shop—but simply the gift of time, the gift of being with her. Three saints’ descriptions of friends reveal the beauty of friendship with my Yaya.

“GOD SENDS US FRIENDS TO BE OUR FIRM SUPPORT IN THE WHIRLPOOL OF STRUGGLE. IN THE COMPANY OF FRIENDS WE WILL FIND STRENGTH TO ATTAIN OUR SUBLIME IDEAL.” **ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE**

I distinctly recall being nine and rushing downstairs to call Yaya so that she could convince my parents of their obvious unfairness (or, if that failed, to run away and live with her). While Yaya ultimately imparted her wisdom to me (asserting that a 10 o’clock departure to fly or walk halfway across the country was not a possibility), even at age nine

I knew wholeheartedly that Yaya was my pillar of strength in any whirlpool of struggle. In the later torrents of college decisions, elite academic institutions, and collegiate athletics that challenged my identity, Yaya’s company or conversation imparted almost immediate peace. To encounter Yaya is to encounter a love so genuine that it mediates God’s love; in a way nothing else can, Yaya’s love grounds me in God’s peace and reconnects me to the strength I need to make God’s sublime ideal my own.

“LOVE EVERYONE WITH A DEEP LOVE BASED ON CHARITY...BUT FORM FRIENDSHIPS ONLY WITH THOSE WHO CAN SHARE VIRTUOUS THINGS WITH YOU. THE HIGHER THE VIRTUES YOU SHARE AND EXCHANGE WITH OTHERS, THE MORE PERFECT YOUR FRIENDSHIP WILL BE.” **ST. FRANCIS DE SALES**

I have few exemplars of how to love others more ardently than my Yaya. The fruit of a life lived in intentional relationship with the Trinity radiates from her beautiful smile and warm hugs. My relationship with Yaya has always instilled in me a deep admiration of the virtues that bejewel her way of daily life. Grace shines as she patiently welcomes my large family when we inhabit her home for two weeks each summer, as she readies a heart for reconciliation with the briefest of conversations, or as she shares her generosity



The more time I spend with Yaya, the more grateful I become not for the adventures I cherished most as a child—trips to the beach, the amusement park, or our beloved local ice cream shop—but simply the gift of time, the gift of being with her.

of spirit through warm hospitality. During our yearly summer vacation, my eight-person family seems to ever so subtly become a better version of themselves, especially in Yaya’s presence. The older I become, the more I desire to become like Yaya—to embody God’s love, whose fruit is virtue. Yaya’s embodiment of charity serves not only as a model but as a means to draw me closer to the source of virtue manifest in her life.

“FRIENDSHIP, AS IT HAS BEEN SAID, CONSISTS IN A FULL COMMITMENT OF THE WILL TO ANOTHER PERSON WITH A VIEW TO THAT PERSON’S GOOD.” **ST. JOHN PAUL II**

Few people more sincerely desire my good than Yaya. With unparalleled wisdom and a heart capable of beautifully pure love, Yaya expresses her commitment to my good with gentle honesty and concern about my happiness. Yaya never withholds her honest opinion, which I hold in high esteem. She also cares deeply about my happiness; she never lets me leave without asking if I am happy in my study or work. Even amidst trials, Yaya points out that happiness can be found in perseverance and moments of peace—it is this deep happiness about which she asks, not merely the whimsical happiness that ebbs and flows with life’s peaks and valleys.

Cherished friends bring me joy, calling me by word and example to be a better version of myself—to be who God made me to be. My Yaya embodies holiness, calling me to it with her example and the way she lives, the way she loves; she draws me closer to holiness through our friendship. As Yaya was an English teacher, poetry captures well what her example and our friendship has taught me:

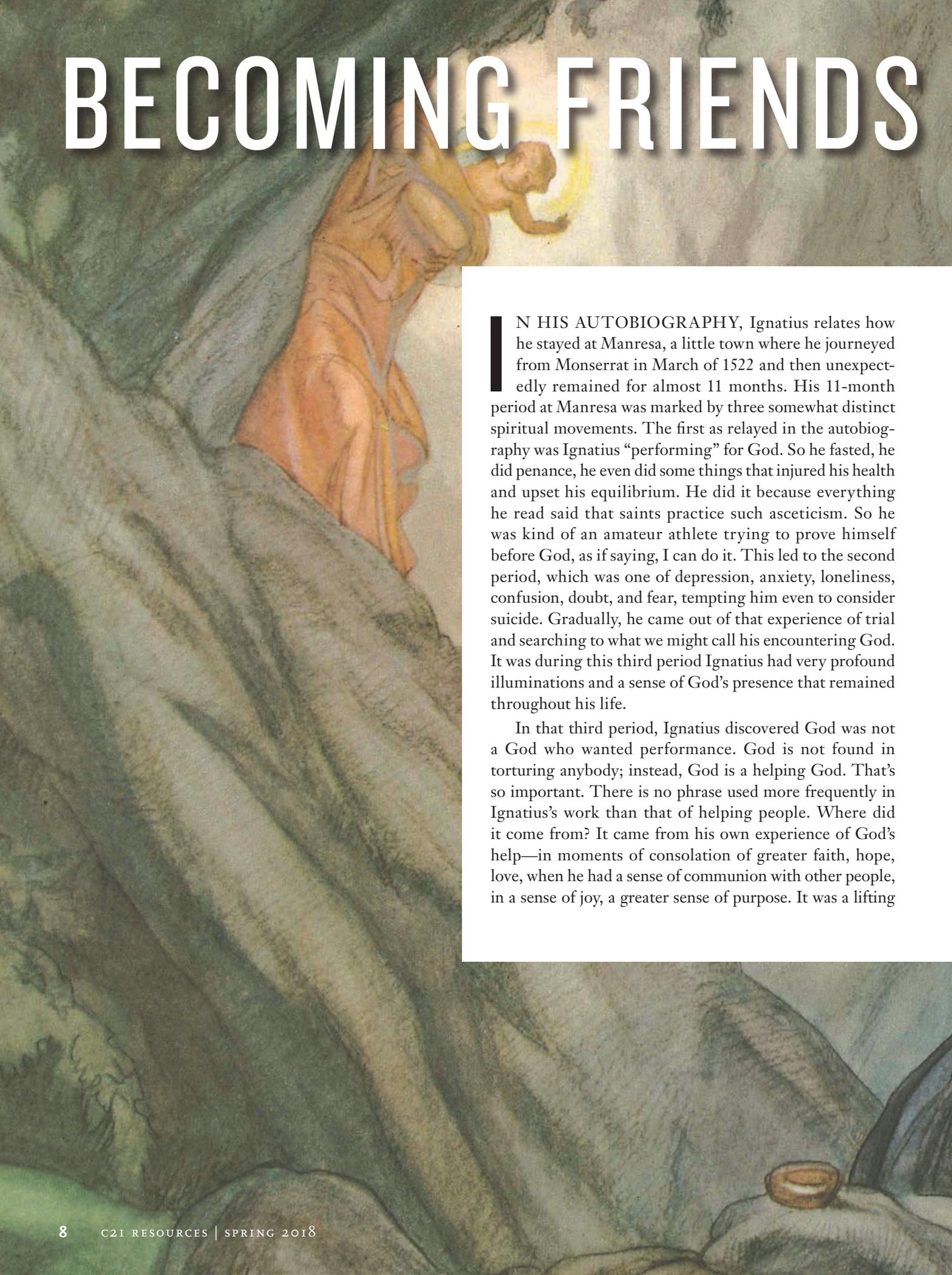
“AND WE ARE PUT ON EARTH A LITTLE SPACE,
THAT WE MAY LEARN TO BEAR THE BEAMS OF
LOVE...” **WILLIAM BLAKE** ■

MEGAN HEEDER earned a B.A. and an M.A. from the University of Notre Dame and is currently earning a Master’s in Theological Studies at the School of Theology and Ministry at Boston College.

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 7: Megan Heeder and her grandmother, Yaya. Submitted with permission.

BECOMING FRIENDS



IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY, Ignatius relates how he stayed at Manresa, a little town where he journeyed from Monserrat in March of 1522 and then unexpectedly remained for almost 11 months. His 11-month period at Manresa was marked by three somewhat distinct spiritual movements. The first as relayed in the autobiography was Ignatius “performing” for God. So he fasted, he did penance, he even did some things that injured his health and upset his equilibrium. He did it because everything he read said that saints practice such asceticism. So he was kind of an amateur athlete trying to prove himself before God, as if saying, I can do it. This led to the second period, which was one of depression, anxiety, loneliness, confusion, doubt, and fear, tempting him even to consider suicide. Gradually, he came out of that experience of trial and searching to what we might call his encountering God. It was during this third period Ignatius had very profound illuminations and a sense of God’s presence that remained throughout his life.

In that third period, Ignatius discovered God was not a God who wanted performance. God is not found in torturing anybody; instead, God is a helping God. That’s so important. There is no phrase used more frequently in Ignatius’s work than that of helping people. Where did it come from? It came from his own experience of God’s help—in moments of consolation of greater faith, hope, love, when he had a sense of communion with other people, in a sense of joy, a greater sense of purpose. It was a lifting

WITH GOD

AN IGNATIAN PERSPECTIVE

HOWARD GRAY, S.J.

of all the darkness that had befallen him earlier and the gift of realizing our God is One of consolation. So important was that to Ignatius that the early Jesuits called their work “ministries of consolation,” bringing people what Ignatius had discovered: our God is a helping God. It’s important to recognize that this emerged only after a tough period of searching, doubt, and pain. This helping God Ignatius found moved through consolation to illuminate that God is both of affection and companionship. God not only loves us but likes to be with us.

These two aspects of Ignatius’s relationship to God were to color all his life. God not only loves us but walks with us through the pilgrimage of life. *The Spiritual Exercises* Ignatius composed originated with his Manresa experience, to be fine-tuned throughout his life. At their core, the *Exercises* in their totality are a way of engaging God, of encountering God as did Ignatius; that is, as a God of affection and a God of companionship—our friend. Through the movements of formal prayer and ongoing reflections, people who follow the Ignatian path come to encounter a God who cares deeply for them and journeys with them. Both these subjective realities, of being loved and being accompanied by God, mirror the revelation of the God of Exodus and reflect the style of Christ on the road to Emmaus. So in Ignatius and in his testimony handed on to us in the *Exercises*, we find two core attributes of God as friend: love and companionship.

In time these developed into one of the key theological notions of Ignatius, namely that of providence. For Ignatius,

providence was not simply the overall governance of God over creation and its development but the individual and specific care God continually gives to each person in their historical and existential context. In the words of the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, this sense of God’s providence is the “dearest freshness that dwells deep down things.”

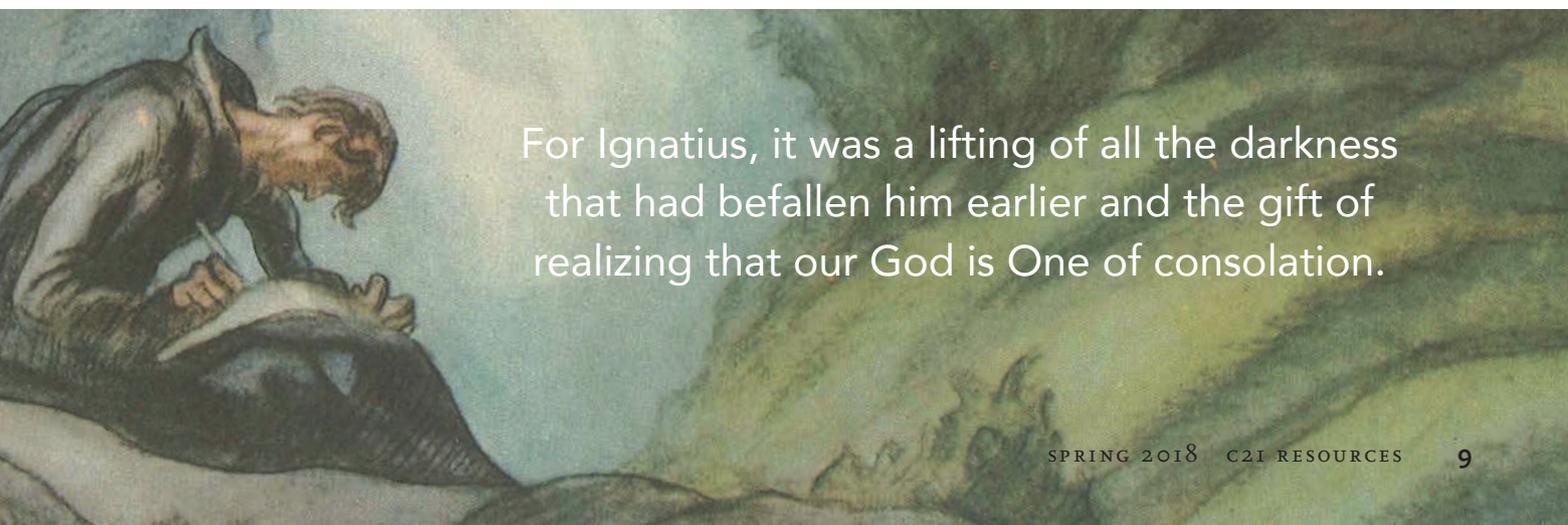
One can describe *The Spiritual Exercises*, then, as authentic self-discovery before God. Isn’t that finally what any genuine friendship, human or divine, offers us? Self-discovery before another. And that is the core of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Who am I before God? This gift of seeing God as a helping God, as showing provident care, and leading us to walk our own authentic way but in God’s company are three great gifts that distinguish Jesuit spirituality. They undergird the “friendship with God” core of what Ignatius and his first companions forged through self-discovery and prayerful discernment. ■

HOWARD GRAY, S.J., was the assistant to the president for special projects at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, and currently works at Manresa Jesuit Retreat House.

This selection is an excerpt from the March 19, 2015, lecture “The Challenges and Graces of Friendship: An Ignatian Perspective” and delivered as part of the Georgetown University Sacred Lecture Series. Printed with the permission of the author.

PHOTO CREDIT: Pages 8-9: Watercolor of St Ignatius of Loyola writing his *Spiritual Exercises* by Carlos Saenz de Tejada (1897-1958) and published posthumously as prints by the Jesuit periodical *El Mensajero de Corazon de Jesus* (Bilbao, 1958).

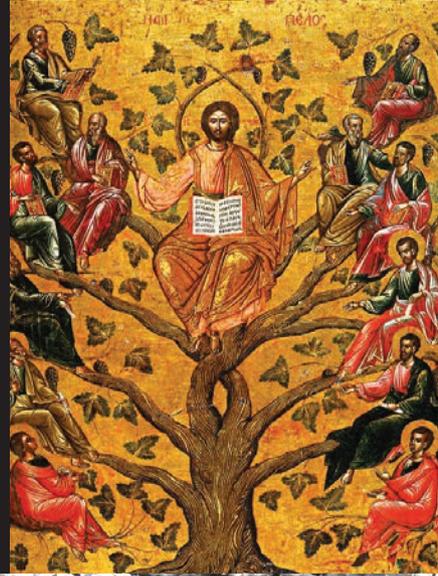
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For Ignatius, it was a lifting of all the darkness that had befallen him earlier and the gift of realizing that our God is One of consolation.

THE JOY OF LIVING AS FRIENDS OF JESUS

PHEME PERKINS





ONE OF THE richest images in all of Scripture is of Jesus as the vine and disciples as branches (John 15:1-17). Here John portrays the ultimate calling for disciples—to love as Jesus loved. As we do so freely—not as slaves—we grow in friendship with Jesus, and this intimacy is what brings lasting joy. Having announced, “I am the vine, you are the branches,” Jesus elaborates:

AS THE FATHER HAS LOVED ME, SO HAVE I LOVED YOU; ABIDE IN MY LOVE. IF YOU KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS, YOU WILL ABIDE IN MY LOVE, JUST AS I HAVE KEPT MY FATHER’S COMMANDMENTS AND ABIDE IN HIS LOVE. THESE THINGS I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU THAT MY JOY MAY BE IN YOU, AND THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL. 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 A SERVANT DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HIS MASTER IS DOING; BUT I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS, FOR ALL THAT I HAVE HEARD FROM THE 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 15:5, 7-17

This commentary on the vine image of verses 1-6 opens up several dimensions of the role played by the love command in the Johannine community. The “abiding” language in John always means to be a disciple of Jesus. Consequently, the passage encourages Christians not to give up under persecution (verse 18). But “abiding” is not simply concerned with remaining in the community. Christians must glorify God by “bearing much fruit,” apparently a reference to the fact they will have to witness to Jesus before the hostile world. Thus, the community is being entrusted with continuing Jesus’ own mission.

The obedience of the community to Jesus’ commandments is equivalent to Jesus’ perfect obedience to the Father. The highest example and foundation of that love is Jesus’ death for his friends, for the Johannine disciples are now friends, not slaves.

The introduction of friendship makes it possible to expand the love commandment with themes from the Hellenistic friendship tradition. True friendship was commonly said to be between those equal in virtue. Jewish tradition applied this ideal to Moses, the friend of God. Here John has expanded that friendship to include all who are united with Jesus and the Father. The wisdom tradition also held that the righteous are “friends of God” (Wisdom 7:27). One of the privileges of such a friend of God was that such a person could speak boldly (in prayer) to God. Jesus as the incarnate divine wisdom now extends to his disciples a privilege that had been thought to belong only to a few righteous ones. They are now friends of God. However, John makes it clear that this new status does not derive from the particular progress toward philosophic virtue that Jewish tradition attributed to Moses. Christians are “friends of God” because they are “friends of Jesus.” That friendship is grounded, not in equality of virtue, but in the Christian community’s obedience to his command of love. ■

PHEME PERKINS is the Joseph Professor of Catholic Spirituality at Boston College.

PHEME PERKINS, *Love Commands in the New Testament* (Paulist Press, 1982) 109-11, excerpt reprinted with the permission of Paulist Press.

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 10 (inset) Christ the True Vine icon (Athens 16th century).jpg, Wikimedia Commons. Pages 10-11: ©iStock.com.

Lazarus as Friend



JEAN VANIER

IN LUKE'S GOSPEL, Jesus tells a moving story. There was a beggar named Lazarus who lived in the streets. He was hungry and his legs were covered with sores. Living opposite him, in a beautiful house, was a rich man who used to give big parties for his friends. Lazarus would have liked to have eaten some of the crumbs that fell from his table, but the dogs ate them up. One day, Lazarus died and went to the place of peace, in the "heart of Abraham." The rich man also died and he went to the "place of torment." Looking up, he saw Lazarus radiant with peace and he cried out: "Father Abraham, please send Lazarus down to put some water on my lips for I am in pain!" Abraham responded: "It is impossible. Between you and him there is an abyss that nobody can cross." He could have added: "Just as there had been an abyss between you and him during your life on earth."



THIS STORY OF Lazarus tells us a lot about today's world, where there is a huge abyss between those who have food, money, and comfort and those who are hungry or have no place of their own. I remember seeing children in Calcutta, their noses glued to the window of a luxurious restaurant. From time to time, the doorman would shoo them away. The rich—and that includes me and many of you who are reading this—do not like to see dirty beggars staring at them. Haven't we all felt embarrassment and fear in front of those who are hungry?

What is this abyss that separates people? Why are we unable to look Lazarus straight in the eye and listen to him?

I suspect we exclude Lazarus because we are frightened that our hearts will be touched if we enter into a relationship with him. If we listen to his story and hear his cry of pain we will discover he is a human being. We might be touched by his broken heart and by his misfortunes. What happens when our hearts are touched? We might want to do something to comfort and help him, to alleviate his pain, and where will that lead us? As we enter into dialogue with a beggar, we risk entering into an adventure. Because Lazarus needs not only money but also a place to stay, medical treatment, maybe work, and, even more, he needs friendship.

This is why it is dangerous to enter into a relationship with the Lazaruses of our world. If we do, we risk our lives being changed.

All of us are, more or less, locked up in our cultures, in our habits, even in our friendships and places of belonging. If I become the friend of a beggar, I rock the boat. Friends may

feel uncomfortable, even threatened, by my new ways; perhaps they feel challenged to do likewise. They may become aggressive, they may criticize the foolish, so-called utopian ways of the one in their midst who befriends a beggar.

I am beginning to discover how fear is a terrible motivating force in all our lives. We are frightened of failure and of rejection. And I have become increasingly aware not only of my own fears but of the fears of others. Fear is at the root of all forms of exclusion, just as trust is at the root of all forms of inclusion.

This fear of the different is very marked when it comes to people with intellectual disabilities. I remember when I first met Fr. Thomas Phillippe, the French priest who became my spiritual accompanier when I left the navy and who was instrumental in the founding of L'Arche. He invited me to meet his "new friends" in a small institution where he was the chaplain. At the time, I was teaching philosophy at St. Michael's College in Toronto. I accepted his invitation but, nevertheless, I was very anxious. How was I going to communicate with people who could not talk? If they could talk, what could we talk about? I was fearful of not being able to cope with the situation or of not knowing what to do and of being inadequate.

People with intellectual disabilities are generally placed at the lowest end of the human spectrum. When I first encountered them at L'Arche, I believed in love but, for me, love meant generosity, doing good for others. At that time, I did not realize that through our love we can help others to discover their own intrinsic value; we can reveal to them their beauty and their uniqueness.

Gradually, through L'Arche, I began to see the value of the communion of

hearts and of a love that empowers, that helps others to stand up; a love that shows itself in humility and in trust. If our society has difficulty in functioning, if we are continually confronted by a world in crisis, full of violence, of fear, of abuse, I suggest it is because we are not clear about what it means to be human. We tend to reduce being human to acquiring knowledge, power, and social status. We have disregarded the heart, seeing it only as a symbol of weakness, the center of sentimentality and emotion, instead of as a powerhouse of love that can reorient us from our self-centeredness, revealing to us and to others the basic beauty of humanity, empowering us to grow.

The excluded, I believe, live certain values that we all need to discover and to live ourselves before we can become truly human. It is not just a question of performing good deeds for those who are excluded but of being open and vulnerable to them in order to receive the life that they can offer; it is to become their friends. If we start to include the disadvantaged in our lives and enter into heartfelt relationships with them, they will change things in us. They will call us to be people of mutual trust, to take time to listen and be with each other. They will call us out from our individualism and need for power into belonging to each other and being open to others. They will break down the prejudices and protective walls that gave rise to exclusion in the first place. They will then start to affect our human organizations, revealing new ways of being and walking together. ■

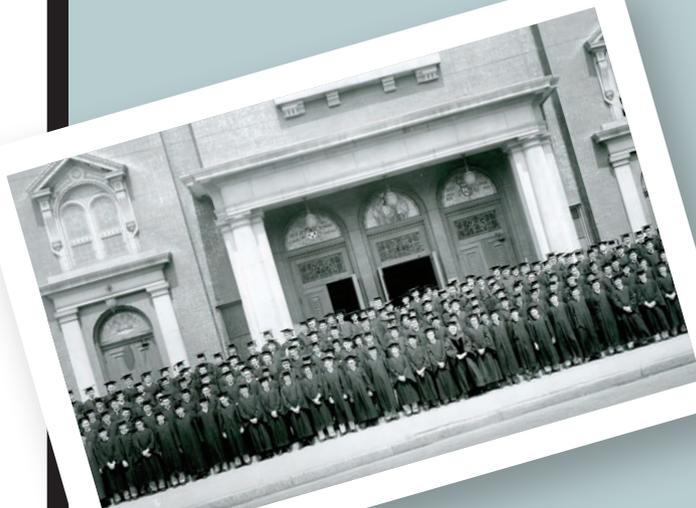
JEAN VANIER is a philosopher, theologian, and humanitarian, and the founder of the international movement of L'Arche communities.

John Vanier, *Becoming Human* (Paulist Press, 1998), 69-71, 76-78, 84, excerpts reprinted with permission of Paulist Press.

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 12: Courtesy of L'Arche Boston.

DEEP AND ABIDING FRIENDSHIP LASTS FOREVER

ROBERT NEWTON



University of Scranton Commencement '57

LAST MONTH, three members of my University of Scranton 1957 graduating class died, two of whom I knew well and regarded as good friends. We had gone our separate ways after graduation but the memories of our interactions and my admiration for them had not dimmed over the succeeding decades, even with only occasional sightings and reports. Their obituaries bore out their exceptional lives of accomplishment and generosity.

Earlier this year, I decided, after several years of silence except for Christmas greetings, to reconnect with Patrick O'Brien, a dear friend of 60-plus years. I wrote him a long letter over a weekend and mailed it Monday morning. On Wednesday, I received a call from his wife saying she had received the letter that day, and my friend had died on the previous Sunday after 10 days in the hospital suffering from pneumonia. I wrote her a long letter describing key moments in our friendship over his lifetime, reflecting on how much that friendship had colored and in some instances changed my life.

I came to Boston College 38 years ago, where I met Bill Neenan, S.J. We worked together for 11 years in academic administration and established a deep respect and friendship. When he retired as academic vice president, he presided in a house across from my office. Twice a week, sometimes more, I would visit him and was always greeted with: "Come on in; have you heard the latest? or have I got a story to tell you!" He died suddenly a few years ago after a rich and fulfilling life, a life dedicated to finding God in everyone he encountered.

When I reflect on these old friends, I can say both that I miss them, but also that I do not miss them—because I continue to experience their presence in my life: their goodness, their humanity, their humor, their faith, the joy and fulfillment that was mine through knowing them. I imagine that others reading this reflection who are in later life have the same experience.

The Mass of Christian burial reminds us: “Indeed for your faithful, Lord, life is changed not ended, and, when this earthly dwelling turns to dust, an eternal dwelling is made ready for them in heaven.” It remains my conviction that in death, friendship is changed not ended, and that when a good friend departs, he or she remains vibrant in the lives they touched in their earthly pilgrimage, continuing to enlighten and enrich those who live on. A true friendship transcends the grave, bridging the boundary between life and death. ■

ROBERT NEWTON is the special assistant to the president at Boston College. He previously served as the associate academic vice president.

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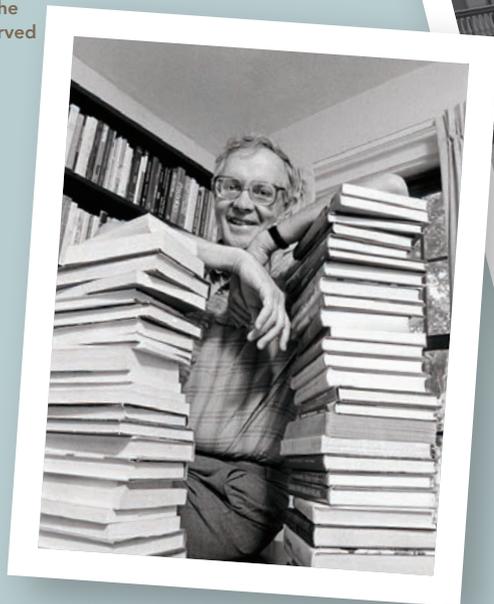
PHOTO CREDITS: Page 14: Thank you to the Special Collections staff at the Weinberg Memorial Library, University of Scranton, for use of the 1957 Commencement photo.



Robert Newton (center) with University of Scranton classmates, celebrating 50th reunion



Patrick O'Brien



William B. Neenan, S.J.



ANCIENT WISDOM ON FRIENDSHIP

MAUREEN TILLEY

MORE OFTEN THAN any other religious figure, Augustine examines the theme of friendship. Likewise, more than any other religious rule, the Rule of Augustine is based on Augustine's experience of living with friends. Why so?

Augustine's contact with Platonic ideas of friendship was mediated through the Roman statesman and philosopher Cicero. In his dialogue *De Amicitia* (On Friendship), Cicero claims we are attracted to friends, real true friends, because they are good people, people of virtue. He contends we are not attracted because a "friend" can do something for us. While this may happen on occasion, for Cicero it is neither essential to nor the heart of real friendship.

Cicero | According to Cicero, friendship is the strongest tie between persons, even stronger than family. Friends care for each other to the point that, if necessary, they deny their friends' requests and openly criticize them. Best friends will tell each other "no" when one asks for something that is dishonorable or less than good. For Cicero, there is no limit on the good one will do for a friend. Such friendships are not entered into lightly and may even be difficult to maintain, but they are a joy and he contends, "they last forever." Cicero counts true friends as the best gift of heaven.

Aristotle | Aristotle was more pragmatic than Cicero. In Book VIII of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle describes several sorts of relationships, all of which he considered

friendship. They are friendships of pleasure, friendships of utility or usefulness, and friendships of virtue.

Friendships of pleasure are ones in which we feel some affection for a person and want to be close to him or her because the "friend" makes us feel good—not morally good, but merely pleasant. Cicero would have rejected this sort of friendship as unworthy.

Aristotle's second category is composed of people who are useful to us, people with whom we have mutual obligations. But, as one might imagine, such an attitude toward friendship may lead to "using" friends in unattractive ways. Aristotle thinks friendships of utility are more common among older adults. Perhaps he was so inclined since there were no pensions or Social Security in antiquity, and the elderly of his time had to depend on others to meet their daily needs. Such friendships were not always pleasant, but they persisted because for one reason or another one needed the other. But, when the "friend" no longer met a need, the so-called friendship dissolved.

Aristotle calls his last category perfect friendship—the virtuous friendship of equals. He contends if persons are not equals, temptation always exists for the friendship to become one of pleasure or utility. According to Aristotle, true friends are attracted to each other because of the good they see in each other, not for personal advantage. True friends are persons who wish each other well and do whatever is necessary for the other—whatever helps maximize the good, the virtuous, in the other person's life. These are the friends of the style that Cicero prized and Augustine, in his mature years, found to be the best kind of friend. But it was not always this way with Augustine.



Cicero claims we are attracted to friends,
real true friends, because they are good
people, people of virtue.

Augustine | Readers of Books II and IV of *Confessions* will know a lot about Augustine's friends and companions. Augustine's first story of friendship takes place when he was 16, when his parents were too short on money to pay his tuition. He spent time with a group of unnamed, so-called friends. One day they set out to steal some pears. He did it out of a perverted craving for friendship, one of Aristotle's friendships of pleasure that both Plato and Cicero would have disdained. Augustine later confessed that he knew at the time it was wrong, but nonetheless he loved the lawlessness and found pleasure in it, a pleasure these so-called friends facilitated.

Later, when Augustine was able to go back to school, he fell in with another group of so-called friends—the Wreckers. While Augustine claims he did not join in the wrecking, he found their company both pleasurable and just a little disturbing. It was not a friendship of equals and therefore could not be a true friendship. The friendships were short-lived.

His first extended story of a single friend occurs a little later in his life. A young man and Augustine became friends because of shared experiences and interests. Both had been brought up in Christian households. This was a friendship of equals who wished each other well and hoped to cultivate some good in each other. Through illness, the friend became very religious, but not Augustine. He wasn't ready to

settle down, religiously or in any other way. And so, just as Cicero would have predicted, their friendship fell apart.

This certainly was a better friendship than the evil one of pear-tree fame or with the mischievous Wreckers, but as with those friendships, this one did not endure.

In retrospect, Augustine could diagnose what was wrong in this friendship. There was something missing in it, something that prevented them from being best friends forever. Augustine confesses: "No friends are true friends unless you, my God, bind them fast to one another through that love which is sown in our hearts by the Holy Spirit." Because Augustine was not ready for a relationship with God, he could not have the true friendship, which outlasts time and even death.

Emblematic of true friendship is Augustine's relationship with Alypius. He is one of the rare persons mentioned by name in the first part of *Confessions*. The two men had known each other since youth. They both studied rhetoric and spent time together among the Manichees before being baptized, on the same night, by St. Ambrose. Alypius, like Augustine, eventually became a bishop.

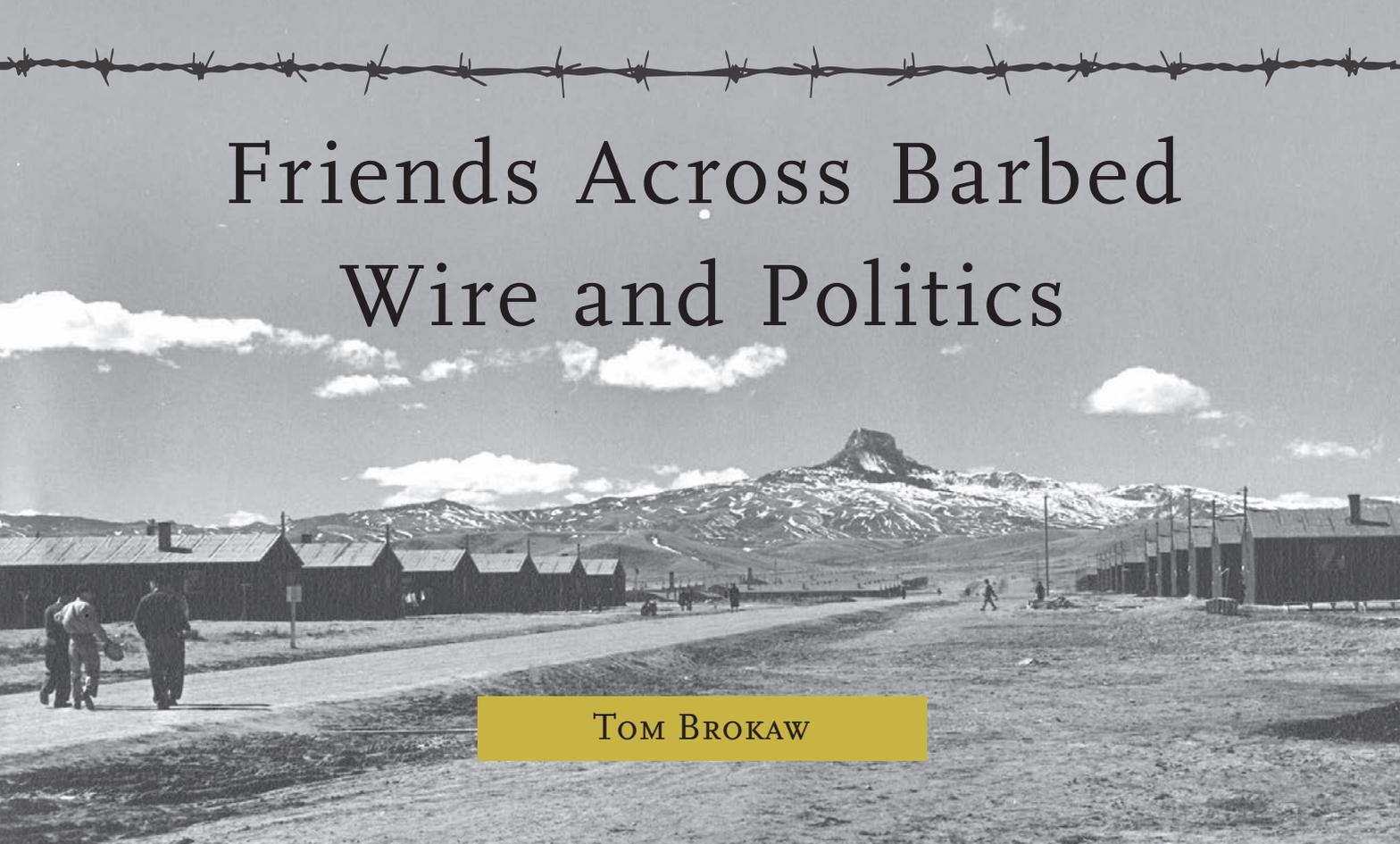
When Augustine first speaks of Alypius in *Confessions* he says: "He was greatly attached to me because he thought that I was a good and learned man, and I was fond of him because, although he was still young, it was quite clear that he had a natural disposition to goodness." Augustine

describes their errant ways and then stops, almost in an aside, and adds two remarks. The first is, "I had forgotten that I might use my influence with him to prevent him from wasting his talents in this thoughtless, impetuous enthusiasm for futile pastimes." So even before Augustine's conversion, he knew this friendship was good. His second remark makes this clear: "But you, O Lord, who hold the reins of all you have created, had not forgotten this man who was one day to be a bishop and administer your sacrament to your children. You used me to set him on the right path, but so that we might recognize that it was all by your doing, you used me without my knowledge." This was a true friendship because it encompassed a third partner, God. In this relationship we hear an echo of the definition of true friendship: "No friends are true friends unless you, my God, bind them fast to one another through that love, which is sown in our hearts by the Holy Spirit." ■

MAUREEN TILLEY was a professor at Fordham University. Her research focused on Christianity during the late antiquity era.

This article is adapted from a 2011 lecture delivered by Tilley while visiting Villanova University as the Thomas F. Martin, OSA Fellow of the Augustinian Institute. The shorter work, originally published in *Heart of the Matter*, the annual magazine of the Office for Mission and Ministry at Villanova University, resulted from collaboration between Tilley and Christopher M. Janosik, editor of the magazine. Printed with permission.

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Friends Across Barbed Wire and Politics

TOM BROKAW

THIS YEAR IS the 75th anniversary of one of the most shameful acts in American history. In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 two months after the Pearl Harbor attack, consigning more than 110,000 Japanese-Americans on the West Coast to crudely constructed concentration camps in remote areas.

Without hard evidence or due process, the targets of 9066 were considered “security risks,” even though young Japanese-American men were volunteering for military service and many of their elders were appalled by the militaristic mania that had taken over Tokyo.

Japanese-American businessmen, farmers, fishermen, educators, and doctors, even Japanese-Americans who fought for the United States in World War I, were sneeringly lumped together under a denigrating shorthand: Japs.

This summer I attended a reunion of camp survivors and their offspring at Heart Mountain, a barren slice of north-central Wyoming where 10,000 Japanese-Americans lived in primitive barracks surrounded by barbed wire, watched over by armed guards.

Heart Mountain was a vivid and enduring lesson for two men who met there, a lesson that reverberates today.

Norman Mineta, the son of a prosperous Japanese-American insurance agent from California, arrived at Heart Mountain as a 10-year-old, a Cub Scout and a baseball enthusiast whose bat was confiscated because it might be used as a weapon.

Despite the prisonlike environment, some parents organized a Boy Scout Jamboree, inviting nearby Wyoming troops to join them. Only one did, from neighboring Cody.

Among that troop’s members was a gregarious teenager named Alan Simpson, and he had reservations about spending time at a concentration camp. “There was barbed wire, guys in towers with searchlights and a gun,” he recalled to me. “Why would I want to go there?”

But he did go, and quickly formed what turned into a lifelong friendship of common interests and shared values with Mr. Mineta. Who could have guessed that the two scouts would someday serve together in Washington? Mr. Simpson, the tall, conservative Republican, became a senator; Mr. Mineta, a liberal Democrat, was elected to the House and became secretary of transportation under President George W. Bush.

When they found themselves together again in Washington in the late 1970s, they were on opposite sides



Norman Mineta, former U.S. secretary of transportation, and former Senator Alan Simpson

of the aisle, but the bonds of their relationship transcended conventional political divisions.

Mr. Mineta recruited his friend for the dogged congressional fight to get reparations for the Japanese-Americans who had been imprisoned, many of whom lost their businesses, farms, and real estate—but never their determination to be full and equal American citizens.

It took 10 years—and it wasn't easy—but they succeeded in enacting legislation that President Ronald Reagan signed in 1988. Mr. Simpson says many of his Republican colleagues resisted, asking: "Who's next? African-Americans? Do we do Native Americans?"

Mr. Simpson said he countered: "That's not the issue. I was there. I saw what they went through." He also remembers a sign on a Cody business: "No Japs allowed, you SOBs killed my son."

This son of Wyoming says it was one of the most important votes he cast in his three-term Senate career, and it was a matter of principle more than a gesture of friendship.

As secretary of transportation, Mr. Mineta was a key figure after September 11 in grounding air traffic immediately after the attack and then setting up new airport security measures. He vividly remembers Representative David Bonior, a Democrat from the Detroit area, reminding President Bush he had many Muslim constituents and they were very worried about having their travel restricted or being rounded up and detained—as Mr. Mineta had been.

So Mr. Mineta was surprised and relieved when the president said, "We don't want to have happen today what Norm went through in 1942."

Mr. Simpson and Mr. Mineta, both 85, are similarly appalled by the hyperpartisan political climate in Washington today. Mr. Mineta uses their friendship as an example of what has been lost.

"We got to know each other," he said. "Now members of Congress don't know each other. They don't have personal relationships. They're too reliant on staff and lobbyists."

As for his own party, Mr. Mineta said: "They're trying to find a message. It's too early to tell." He added, "Running up and down the street with a placard isn't the answer." He also urged young people to get into public service "to be at the table. If you're not there," he said, "other people are making decisions that impact you."

His Republican friend, typically, is more blunt. "It's embarrassing," Mr. Simpson thundered when asked about the current political environment. He said that September 11 "injected something into us called fear." And that fear, he worries, is overriding an important lesson of history: that patriotism, forgiveness, and tolerance can coexist.

The senator likes to recall the words of Justice Frank Murphy, one of only three dissenting votes when President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 was upheld by the United States Supreme Court in 1944. Justice Murphy wrote that "the broad provisions of the Bill of Rights" are not "suspended by the mere existence of a state of war. Distinctions based on color and ancestry are utterly inconsistent with our traditions and ideals."

Today, Justice Murphy's carefully worded statement would no doubt set off a tweet storm of epic proportions, blowing through the lessons of history. ■

TOM BROKAW is an American television journalist and author. He now serves as a special correspondent for NBC News.

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PHOTO CREDITS: Page 18: Heart Mountain Relocation Center, photo courtesy of KBIA.org Page 19: ©StAugustine.com.



THICH NHAT HANH IS MY BROTHER

THOMAS MERTON

On May 28, 1966, at the height of the Vietnam War, Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese monk, poet, and peacemaker, visited Merton at Gethsemani in company with John Heidbrink, head of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Merton was impressed by the visit and wrote the following tribute—excerpted.



This unity of the young
is the only hope
of the world.

THIS IS NOT a political statement. It has no “interested” motive, it seeks to provoke no immediate action “for” or “against” this or that side in the Vietnam War. It is on the contrary a human and personal statement and an anguished plea for the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, who is my brother. He is more my brother than many who are nearer to me by race and nationality, because he and I see things exactly the same way. He and I deplore the war that is ravaging his country. We deplore it for exactly the same reasons: human reasons, reasons of sanity, justice, and love. We deplore the needless destruction, the fantastic and callous ravaging of human life, the rape of the culture and spirit of an exhausted people. It is surely evident that this carnage serves no purpose that can be discerned and indeed contradicts the alleged intentions of the mighty nation that has constituted itself the “defender” of the people it is destroying.

Nhat Hanh is a free man who has acted as a free man in favor of his brothers and moved by the spiritual dynamic of a tradition of religious compassion. He has come among us as many others have, from time to time, bearing witness to the spirit of Zen. More than any other he has shown us that Zen is not an esoteric and world-denying cult of inner illumination, but that it has its rare and unique sense of responsibility in the modern world. Wherever he goes he will walk in the strength of his spirit and in the solitude of the Zen monk who sees beyond life and death. It is for our own honor as much as for his safety that we must raise our voices to demand that his life and personal integrity be fully respected when he returns to his smashed and gutted country, there to continue his work with the students and peasants, hoping for the day when reconstruction can begin.

I have said that Nhat Hanh is my brother, and it is true. We are both monks, and we have lived the monastic life about the same number of years. We are both poets, existentialists. I have far more in common with Nhat Hanh than I have with many Americans, and I do not hesitate to say it. It is vitally important that such bonds be admitted. They are the bonds of a new solidarity and a new brotherhood which is beginning to be evident on all the five continents and which cut across all political, religious, and cultural lines to unite young men and women in every country in something that is more concrete than an ideal and more alive than a program. This unity of the young is the only hope of the world. In its name I appeal for Nhat Hanh. Do what you can for him. If I mean something to you, then let me put it this way: Do for Nhat Hanh whatever you would do for me if I were in his position. In many ways I wish I were. ■

THOMAS MERTON, O.C.S.O., was an American Catholic writer, theologian, and mystic.

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PHOTO CREDIT: Pages 20-21: *America Magazine: The Jesuit Review*.

JESUS AND PETER AS FRIENDS

MARINA MCCOY

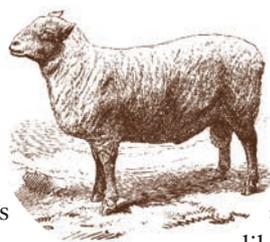
The final chapter of John's Gospel presents an amazing conversation between Jesus and Peter about their friendship; it was as if Jesus needed a threefold assurance—after Peter's threefold denial. Professor Marina McCoy comments, beginning with the central text.

“WHEN THEY HAD FINISHED BREAKFAST, JESUS SAID TO SIMON PETER, ‘SIMON, SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN THESE?’ SIMON PETER ANSWERED HIM, ‘YES, LORD, YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU.’ JESUS SAID TO HIM, ‘FEED MY LAMBS.’ HE THEN SAID TO SIMON PETER A SECOND TIME, ‘SIMON, SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME?’ SIMON PETER ANSWERED HIM, ‘YES, LORD, YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU.’ JESUS SAID TO HIM, ‘TEND MY SHEEP.’ JESUS SAID TO HIM THE THIRD TIME, ‘SIMON, SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME?’ PETER WAS DISTRESSED THAT JESUS HAD SAID TO HIM A THIRD TIME, ‘DO YOU LOVE ME?’ AND HE SAID TO HIM, ‘LORD, YOU KNOW EVERYTHING; YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU.’ JESUS SAID TO HIM, ‘FEED MY SHEEP.’” JOHN 21:15-17

THIS INTERCHANGE BETWEEN Jesus and Peter is so tender. Jesus asks Peter multiple times: “Do you love me?” and we see the reiteration of love and friendship back and forth between them. It is a deeply reconciling moment. As many commentators have suggested, Jesus seems to offer the three questions as a way to allow Peter to affirm what he denied before—his threefold denial of friendship with Jesus.

The Greek terms used in this passage are significant. The first two times that Jesus asks Peter, “Do you love me?” John has Jesus use the Greek *agape*, referring to a love that is unconditional, even self-sacrificing for the good of the other. Later Christian thinkers chose *agape* as the best Greek word to communicate how God loves us and as the ideal for how we ought to love our neighbor: with a love without condition. So Jesus was asking Peter for his unconditional love.

Peter answers Jesus affirmatively: “You know that I love you.” But Peter used the word for a less intense form of love, more the kind associated with friendship—*philia*. *Philia* is the love we have for our friends, the kind of love



that concerns a personal and felt connection. If you are my friend, I love you not just because you are a human being but because we connect in a particular and special way. *Agape* can be one way, as when I love my enemy. But *philia* is reciprocal: like the interchange and give and take between friends in everyday life.

Given Peter had just betrayed Jesus, it makes perfect sense that he would hesitate to tell Jesus that he loves him with an *agapic* love. While Jesus exhibited *agapic* love for Peter in his forgiveness, Peter is being honest in not claiming to be better than he is. So he still tells Jesus that he loves him as his beloved friend, even if he lacks the selfless love that Jesus has for him—and Peter probably wishes that he had for Jesus. Whereupon Jesus asks him the same question a second time, again using the term *agape*. Peter again reiterates his love for Jesus but still settling for the term *philia*.

The third time Jesus changes the question and settles for Peter's language of *philia*; again Peter affirms his *philia* for Jesus. What is going on here? Perhaps there are two possibilities. One is that Peter is admitting that he loves



Jesus as an imperfect and sinful human being, and that Jesus' change to his question the third time is a way to show Peter that he doesn't demand perfect, unfailing love from him. They still have a deep friendship even amidst Peter's human shortcomings.

A second suggestion is that Peter is affirming his particular friendship for Jesus by using the term *philia*. Indeed, *agapic* love is not accurate because of his own shortcomings, but also that Peter loves Jesus simply because Jesus is his friend, because they have a shared story that is distinctive.

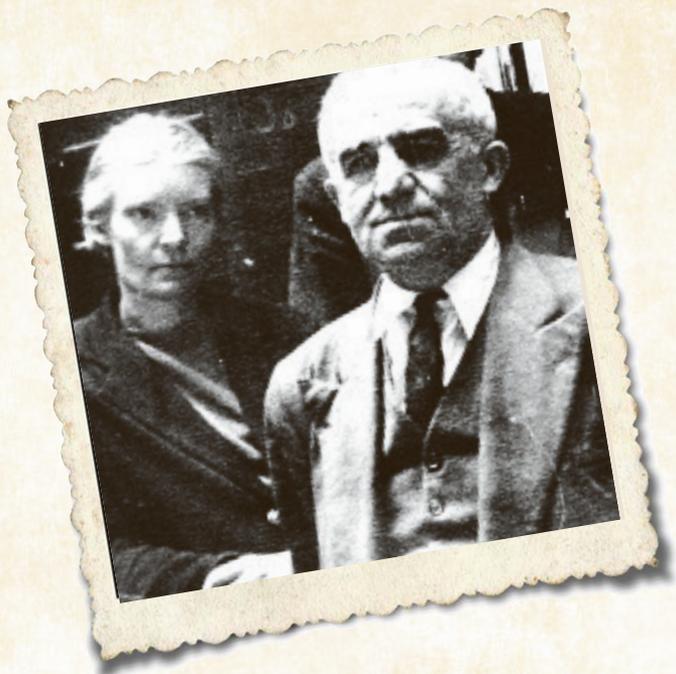
Likewise, Jesus' third question to Peter—as *philia*—might be Jesus' way of affirming the special friendship between them. Yes, Jesus had died for everyone and his Resurrection was for all, and Peter's ministry will also be a ministry as Jesus said, to "feed my sheep." But Jesus' humanity has not disappeared in the Resurrection and Peter still loves his friend Jesus in his particularity. Perhaps his answer "You know that I love you" is in part a rhetorical question posed back to Jesus: Do you love me (Peter) as a friend despite my denials of you? Now that Jesus is resurrected to new life, does that particularity of care between them remain?

We might see Jesus' asking the question the third time with the verb for friendship-love as a clear "yes" to Peter: Jesus loves him as friend and invites his friendship. Jesus loves Peter not simply because he fits into the category of "human being" but in all his particularity: for his gifts, his weaknesses, his strength. Jesus still loves Peter for the history and the story of friendship that exists between them.

Jesus, like God, loves every person this way too. God does not just love us because we are human, or even because we are Christian. God loves and appreciates each of us in our particularity and in all the little distinctive ways in which we each know and live out a certain, concrete, unrepeated history in friendship with God. Jesus is also affirming the good of loving one another in such a truly human way. It's good to love "humanity" but beware of the person who loves humanity, yet doesn't love their family or friends! For it is in our messily human and particular relationships that the most difficult and also the most rewarding loving friendships take place. ■

MARINA MCCOY is an associate professor of philosophy at Boston College.
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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 23: ©iStock.com.



Peter Maurin & Dorothy Day: FRIENDS at WORK

THOMAS W. JODZIEWICZ

PETER MAURIN AND Dorothy Day were collaborators in many ways, and they cultivated a warm friendship. But at the heart of their mutual enterprise was a friendship or grace from and with God, which in turn they offered to each other and to others. True friendship was their antidote to the modern malaise of selfishness and alienation initially let loose in the Garden of Eden.

In their own friendship, and in the face of the false modern claim of self-autonomy, Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day offer a living example of a graced and selfless bonding. Admittedly initiated by God and quickened by his generosity, their own fruitful friendship exposes the aridity of the modern malaise marked by boredom, indifference, materialism, and loneliness. The Catholic Worker movement was obviously and inevitably grounded in the sacraments, the liturgy, and prayer, and both Maurin and Day were persons of faith, hope, and charity. But their pilgrimage was not exclusivist: anyone, Catholic or non-Catholic, was welcome in their midst as each and everyone was invited and encouraged to clarify their thinking and lives and to accept true friendship.

It is clear, though, that the friendship of Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day is central to the story of the movement, this holy project to revivify not just a holy obligation to live the beatitudes in one's own time but also to offer our talents and our vulnerabilities, each to each, in communities of love and friendship. Social justice, the embrace of a decentralizing social trajectory in a century of evermore centralization, a life of prayer and sacramental worship—all of these mark the Catholic Worker charism, and Maurin's intellectual and inspirational contribution is fundamental. Along with her writings, Day provided organizing skills and a very flexible institutional leadership for the movement. But again, and finally, at the center of this contemporary effort to integrate faith and culture was the desire for authentic friendship, blessed community, and life-giving charity. And at the heart of this desire was the relationship, the *agape* friendship and love, of Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day and their lived response to the farewell discourse at the Last Supper:

THIS IS MY COMMANDMENT: LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I LOVE YOU. NO ONE HAS GREATER LOVE THAN THIS, TO LAY DOWN ONE'S LIFE FOR ONE'S FRIENDS. YOU ARE MY FRIENDS IF YOU DO WHAT I COMMAND YOU. I NO LONGER CALL YOU SLAVES, BECAUSE A SLAVE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HIS MASTER IS DOING.... THIS I COMMAND YOU: LOVE ONE ANOTHER.
JOHN 15:12-17 ■

THOMAS W. JODZIEWICZ is a professor of history at the University of Dallas and former president of the Texas Catholic History Society.

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 24: Catholic Worker founders Peter Morin and Dorothy Day. ©Mary House Catholic Worker of Austin, Inc. www.catholicworkeraustin.org.

QUESTIONS, FRIENDSHIP, and the JOURNEY

Who am I? Why am I here?
Where do I come from?
Where am I going?

These four questions adorn my office door in the Theology and Religious Studies Department of Lawrence Hall at Rosemont College, Rosemont, Pennsylvania. I warmly and gratefully recall being introduced to these magnificent sentences during my undergraduate years at Boston College, and so I pass them along each year to members of the learning community at Rosemont in order that we may continue to explore them together along our shared journeys of teaching and learning.

Something struck me about these questions during this past Advent, in 2017, as I slowly approached my office for the last time of the semester before leaving for Christmas break. The insight that emerged for me as I stood before these four interrogatory invitations was this: The answer is friendship.

“‘I HAVE BEGUN TO BE A FRIEND TO MYSELF.’ THAT WAS INDEED A GREAT BENEFIT; SUCH A PERSON CAN NEVER BE ALONE. YOU MAY BE SURE THAT SUCH A MAN IS A FRIEND TO ALL MANKIND.” **SENECA, LETTER 6**

Who am I?

I am a human being who is relational at my very core, on a journey to grow in deeper knowledge of the mystery of myself, which involves a constant commitment to listening to myself—body, mind, spirit—and to responding through an ethic of care and a desire to heal, grow, and be transformed: friendship with self.

“IN ORDER FOR ANYONE TO DO WELL WHETHER IN THE DAILY ACTIVITIES OF LIFE, OR IN THE PEACE OF THEIR OWN HEART, THEY NEED THE FELLOWSHIP OF FRIENDS.” **ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, SUMMA THEOLOGIAE I.II.4.8**

Why am I here?

I am relationally in the world in order to grow in deeper knowledge of the mystery of others and of the cosmos, which involves a constant commitment to listening to others—bodies, minds, hearts—and to the matrices of life within the cosmos—and to responding through an ethic of care and a desire to cultivate an ethos of sustainability and support for others’ healing, growth, and transformation: friendship with others.

“BUT WE HAVE THE PROMISE: WHO SHALL DESTROY IT? ‘IF GOD BE FOR US, WHO IS AGAINST US?’ ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE, SEEK AND YOU SHALL FIND....’ THESE ARE YOUR PROMISES.” **ST. AUGUSTINE, CONFESSIONS XII.1**

Where do I come from?
Where am I going?

The mystery that marks my relationality is rooted in Divine Love, the utterly extravagant-beyond-comparison, self-giving, eternal Love that has oriented all of creation to instinctive modes of relationality that are developed primarily through open and honest communication or interaction, and that are fulfilled through the promotion of well-being, the common good, and transformation: friendship with God.

Who am I? Why am I here?
Where do I come from?
Where am I going?

Questions for the journey.
We are not alone.

JENNIFER CONSTANTINE JACKSON is assistant professor of religious studies at Rosemont College.

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The Dead Are Still

FOR THOSE OF us on earth, there are two ways of relating with the community of saints in heaven. One, which can conveniently be called the patronage model, imagines heaven as a magnificent throne room where the king rules in splendor surrounded by hosts of courtiers ranked in descending order of importance. Being far from the distant throne, we little people need saints as intercessors who will promote our cause and obtain spiritual and material favors that would otherwise not be forthcoming. We need friends in high places, so to speak, that we call upon for favors. This patron-client relationship is not found in the New Testament nor in the earliest Christian centuries. It developed under the influence of the Roman Empire's civil patronage system once the Church had been officially established. This pattern of relationship, so despised by the Protestant Reformers, is waning even in Catholic circles, not least because its structure of power and neediness so misreads the truth of God's merciful presence in Christ to everyone. This is not to say that intercessory prayer to the saints is unwarranted, but the hierarchical framework of such prayer in the patronage model leaves much to be desired.

An alternative, more original pattern of relating to the dead can be discerned in biblical and early martyr texts. Modeled on companionship, it sees those who have died as friends and fellow travelers of the living in the one spirit-filled community. Rather than the main action being prayers of petition from a client to a patron, the main expression of this relationship is acts of remembering that release the power of their witness into the struggles of today. As

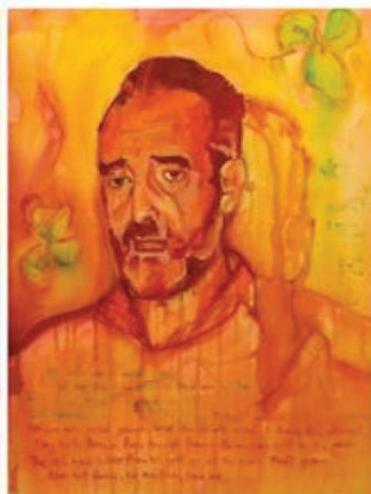
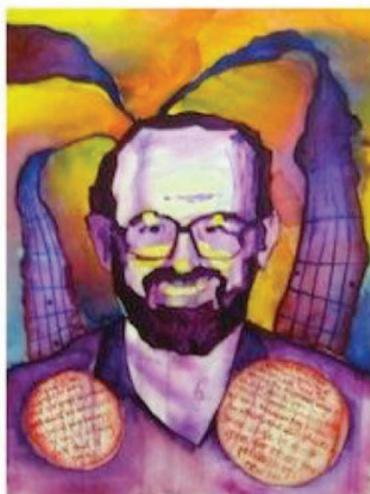
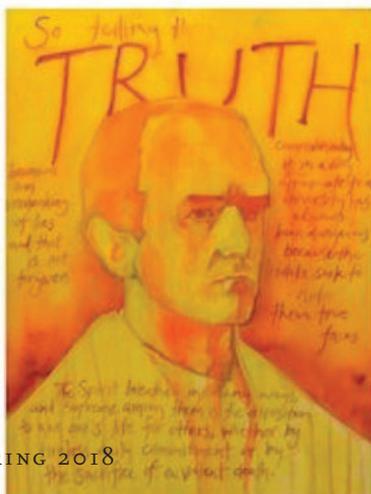
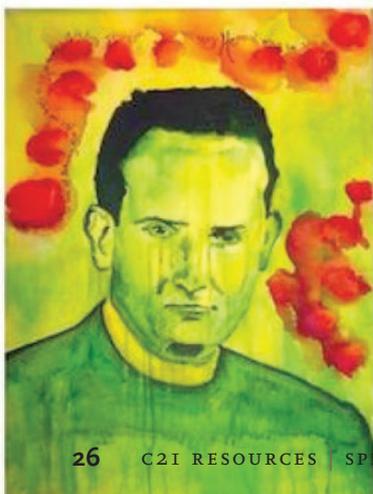
the Friday service broadcast from Temple Emmanuel in New York City prays, "May the beauty of their lives abide among us as a loving benediction." In the companionship model, intercessory prayer becomes intelligible in a collegial context of mutual sharing in God's mercy.

One key example of this companionship pattern is found in the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews. Here there is an extraordinary roll call of Jewish ancestors, all of whom responded to the challenge of their lives with unerring faith in God: Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, the parents of Moses, Rahab, and David, along with myriad others who were persecuted, suffered, and survived, but continued to have faith in God. The text reaches its high point with a dramatic exhortation:

THEREFORE, SINCE WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES, LET US ALSO LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT AND THE SIN THAT CLINGS SO CLOSELY, AND LET US RUN WITH PERSEVERANCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US, LOOKING TO JESUS THE PIONEER AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH.

HEBREWS 12:1-2

Note how the dynamism of this passage moves from the narrative of faithful individuals (19 in all), to whole groups of persons in the past, and then into enthusiastic appeal to the contemporary community. The pervasive sense of solidarity comes to a pitch in the metaphor of the cloud of witnesses surrounding the living community on earth. Biblical



Our Friends

scholars point out the image here is of a stadium packed with a crowd up in the stands, each of whom had once run in the race, now cheering for those on the tarmac. Here the faithful dead are proposed not as the objects of a cult, nor even exemplars to be imitated, but as a compact throng of faithful people whose journey encourages those running the race today. It is a matter of being inspired by the whole lot of them in their wonderful witness to the living God. It is interesting that this New Testament litany of the cloud of witnesses honors figures who were important in the history of Israel but does not include Christian persons who would be equally good candidates, Mary Magdalene, for example, first apostolic witness of the Resurrection, or Stephen, the first martyr. Reflecting reverence for the history of God's holy people before the Christian community came into existence, the passage sees its own audience as recipients of this tradition newly configured in Jesus, pioneer of faith, whose advent does not discredit but rather enhances the history of holiness of his own people.

In the age of the martyrs, this mutual, collegial relationship between the living and the dead came to new expression when the community drew strength from those who gave their lives in witness to Christ. The Church at Smyrna, explaining the difference between Christ whom they worshiped and Polycarp their martyred bishop whom they venerated, put it eloquently: "For [Christ] we worship as the Son of God. But the martyrs we love as disciples and imitators of the Lord, and rightly so because of their matchless affection for their own king and teacher. May we too become their comrades and fellow disciples." The

living were partners, comrades, and codisciples with those who had given their lives, one witnessing to the other, both graced in Christ.

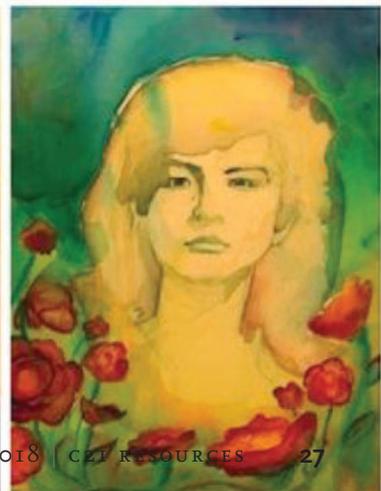
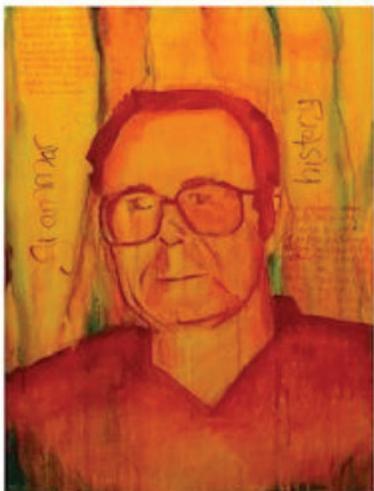
The Second Vatican Council picked up on this model of relationship when it taught: "Just as Christian communion among wayfarers brings us closer to Christ, so our companionship with the saints joins us to Christ, from Whom as from its fountain and head issues every grace and the very life of God's people" (*Lumen Gentium* 50). Rather than be bound in a patron-client pattern, the saints in heaven and on earth become partners in memory and hope. One inspiring example of how this works can be found in El Salvador. Remembering their recent history, people of the base Christian communities recite the traditional litany of the saints and add the names of their own martyrs for the cause of justice.

To each name the people respond *presente*: be here with us, you are here with us. Oscar Romero: *presente*; Ignacio Ellacuría: *presente*; Celina Ramos: *presente*; young catechists, community workers, and religious leaders of the pueblos: *presente*. This prayer summons the memory of these martyrs as a strong, enduring power that commits the community to emulating their lives. ■

ELIZABETH JOHNSON, C.S.J., is Distinguished Professor of Theology at Fordham University. She has served as the president of the Catholic Theological Society of America and the American Theological Society.

Excerpt from *Abounding in Kindness* by Elizabeth Johnson, pp. 273-277, 2015 is reprinted permission from Orbis Books.

PHOTO CREDIT: Pages 26-27: The illustrations commemorate the Jesuit martyrs of El Salvador and their companions with the special 25th anniversary poster. The paintings were originally created by Mary Pimmel-Freeman (Rockhurst University '07) as a thesis project.





RUTILIO
GRANDE

MARTYRED AS FRIENDS

THOMAS M. KELLY

MUCH HAS RIGHTFULLY been written about the life, ministry, and death of Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador. What has not been recognized in the English-speaking world, beyond a brief mention or a politicized sound bite, is the impact of the life, ministry, and death of Rutilio Grande on Romero's thought and ministry. I would argue that it is impossible to understand the ministry and sacrifice of Oscar Romero without the background of his close, personal friend whom he called "a brother." This is evident from a brief look at the homily Archbishop Romero gave at Rutilio's funeral as well

as the structure of one of the last talks given by Romero at the University of Leuven prior to his own assassination. In a way, those two short pieces bookend his time as archbishop and both speak to the influence of his friend Rutilio.

Romero introduced his homily at the funeral of Rutilio with two themes that resonated throughout his time as archbishop—both in his actions and in his pastoral letters. The first theme, broadly considered, was the Church and its proper relationship to the world. The second theme was the uniquely Christian contribution to development. In both cases, the term "liberation" was used. Both were

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. (John 15:13)

framed by the question, “What does the Church provide in the universal struggle for liberation from so much misery?” His response, in many ways, was a summary of the life and ministry of Rutilio Grande.

The Church could not simply be “absent in this struggle for liberation,” said Romero. It must enter into the fray on behalf of the marginalized and poor in a unique way, even when such activity could be misunderstood. Second, Romero argued by quoting Paul VI that the role of the Church in this struggle was to provide the “inspiration of faith” and a motive of “fraternal love” for liberators. The social teaching of the Church was thus offered as a gift of prudence and the basis of commitments that emerged from a motive of love.

Romero understood the death of Rutilio as a result of the confusion between the social teaching of the Church—a teaching that should be the source of all political and social action for believers—and a political doctrine “that hinders the world.” Nevertheless, he exhorted the priests at the funeral to recognize the message of his friend Rutilio as being “most important to us.” He asked that priests embrace this message in light of their faith and work together so as not to be divided by “dangerous ideologies not inspired by faith.” Romero saw the dangers of a purely Marxist starting point for political and social organizing, and he clearly understood that the role of the Church should be separate from this. What made the Church distinct from other ideologies was precisely the argument made by Rutilio in his final homily at Apopa—love is always the key.

Rutilio embodied this Christian form of love, according to Romero, through his accompaniment with

those he served in a posture of humility and determination in the face of their suffering. “Rutilio was a priest who was with his people; he walked in their community in order to identify with them, to live with them, not to be an inspiration of revolution but to be an inspiration of love, a love that inspires us.” According to Romero, the love of God inspired the action of Rutilio. Romero concluded his homily by stating clearly and firmly that the Church had no enemies and that revenge was not the proper response to the death of Rutilio by criminals. He then thanked all the collaborators of Rutilio who worked for Christian liberation. Finally he stated that, yes, there was a solution. “Let us understand this Church, be inspired by this love, and live this faith for I assure you that there is a solution to our great social problems.”

When one compares the three sections of Rutilio's final homily in Apopa with Romero's address at the University of Leuven where he articulated three benefits for the Church making a preferential option for the poor, it is difficult not to see Rutilio's influence on Oscar Romero. In Rutilio's final homily, he addressed first the equality of the children of God, second the risk of living the Gospel, and third those persecuted like Jesus of Nazareth. Similarly, the three benefits to Romero for the Church making an option for the poor included a greater awareness of sin made possible through experiencing it with the people the Church serves; a deeper appreciation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ through an imitation of God's downward movement into human history; and finally, a deeper faith in God and Christ because of the Church's active participation of loving action in the world.

Both Rutilio's homily and Romero's Leuven address begin with a substantial section on the Church in service to the world, which share striking similarities. Both speak of taking on the defense of the poor as well as undergoing persecution for taking on this defense. Finally, both emphasize that “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends” (John 15:13). It would not be too strong to state that Romero lived out what he had seen embodied in the life, ministry, and death of his friend Rutilio Grande. For this reason we can be sure that both Rutilio and Romero realized the final sentence of his Leuven address: “And I also believe that by putting ourselves alongside the poor and trying to bring life to them we shall come to know the eternal truth of the Gospel.”

The successor of Archbishop Romero, Bishop Rivera Damas, offered this thought on the profound influence of Rutilio Grande on the life of Romero: “One martyr gave life to another martyr. Kneeling before the body of his friend Fr. Rutilio Grande, Monseñor Romero, on his 20th day as archbishop, felt the call from Christ to overcome his natural human timidity and to be filled with apostolic courage. From that moment on, Monseñor Romero left the pagan lands of Tyre and Sidon and marched boldly toward Jerusalem.” ■

THOMAS M. KELLY is a professor of systematic theology at Creighton University.

Excerpt from *When the Gospel Grows Feet: An Ecclesiology in Context* by Rutilio Grande, S.J., and the Church of El Salvador. Copyright 2013 by Order of Saint Benedict. Published by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota. Reprinted with permission.

PHOTO CREDIT: Page 28: www.ignatian-solidarity.net.

GOLDEN MOMENTS

C.S. LEWIS

The mark of perfect friendship is not that help will be given when the pinch comes (of course it will) but that, having been given, it makes no difference at all.

A FRIEND WILL, TO BE SURE, prove himself to be also an ally when alliance becomes necessary; will lend or give when we are in need, nurse us in sickness, stand up for us among our enemies, do what he can for our widows and orphans. But such good offices are not the stuff of Friendship.... The stereotyped “Don’t mention it” expresses what we really feel... The mark of perfect Friendship is not that help will be given when the pinch comes (of course it will) but that, having been given, it makes no difference at all... Those are the golden sessions; when four or five of us after a hard day’s walking have come to our inn; when our slippers are on, our feet spread towards the blaze and our drinks at our elbows; when the whole world, and something beyond the world, opens itself to our minds as we talk; and no one has any claim on or any responsibility for another, but all are freemen and equals as if we had first met an hour ago, while at the same time an affection mellowed by the years enfolds us. Life—natural life—has no better gift to give. Who could have deserved it? ■

C.S. LEWIS was a British novelist, poet, academic, essayist, theologian, lecturer, and Christian apologist.

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C21 SPRING EVENTS

The Gift of Friends

Monday, February 19, 2018 | Luncheon

C21 Resources Magazine Launch

Presenter: Timothy Hanchin, Assistant Professor,
Theology and Religious Studies, Villanova University

Location/Time: Gasson Hall 100, Noon

Accompaniment in Practice:

A Conversation with Paul Farmer

Tuesday, February 27, 2018 | Interview

Presenter: Paul Farmer, Co-founder of
Partners in Health

Location/Time: Murray Function Room,
Yawkey Center, 5:30 p.m.

“I Call You Friends”

Thursday, March 15, 2018 | Lecture

Presenter: Cardinal Daniel DiNardo,
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston

Location/Time: Gasson Hall 100, 5:00 p.m.

Working Friendships

Thursday, March 22, 2018 | Luncheon

Presenters: Katie Dalton and Regine Jean-Charles

Location/Time: Gasson Hall 100, Noon

WOMEN'S VOICES SERIES

Faith and Friendship:

A Conversation with Victoria Reggie Kennedy

Tuesday, April 17, 2018 | Interview

Presenter: Victoria Reggie Kennedy

Location/Time: Gasson Hall 100, 5:00 p.m.

Webcast videos will be available within two weeks
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“It can be hard to find God,
and even harder to find
yourself, but if you find a
friend, you find all three.”

— anonymous



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Being Worthy of Friendship

WE HAVE FORGOTTEN the meaning of many words, or, more dangerously, we have redefined them. One of these words is the simple, ancient word: “friend.” While I’m not going to accuse anyone of strategically conspiring to intentionally change the meaning, there has been a hijacking of the word to simply mean “someone who can look at your pictures and random thoughts online.”

Eight years ago, in his address on the 43rd World Communications Day, Pope Benedict turned to the theme of friendship in relation to new technology. In the timeline of technology, 2009 was eons ago, back when people still used MySpace, Twitter was a baby, and Snapchat wasn’t even a gleam in its creator’s eye. In this address, he noted that the desire for communication and relation, as seen in the widespread popularity of new forms of communication, is natural and inherent in the human person. This desire for communication, the pope told us, is not anything new, nor a response to these new technologies. Rather, the new technologies fill the void present in young people’s lives.

Although I’m not as young as I was in 2009, his words resonate with me now as they did then. It’s clear that Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and whatever comes next are the response of a generation starved for community. A majority of my generation has been deprived of a family, whether

by divorce or by our activity-crazed culture. The son or daughter who only sees the back of Mom’s head as she takes him or her to the next practice or club meeting looks to feed the relational needs of their human personhood outside the family—these days, in social networking sites.

Pope Benedict continued that people’s desire for communication causes them to reach beyond themselves: “In reality, when we open ourselves to others, we are fulfilling our deepest need and becoming more fully human.” John Paul II had previously reminded us of this with his famous phrase, “life has meaning to the extent that it becomes a free gift for others.”

Aristotle defined three types of friendship, but said the perfect form is “friendship of the good,” in which people recognize each other’s goodness and help each other to be good. Aristotle writes: “It is those who wish the good of their friends for their friends’ sake who are friends in the fullest sense, since they love each other for themselves and not accidentally.”

Friendship is self-gift. It is living for another in a relationship of sacrifice. Most anyone would agree that a relationship in which one party never gives or sacrifices for the other lacks true friendship. A self-obsessed person cannot be a friend. A friendship is not a friendship if it is not rooted in self-gift.



JOAN WATSON



There is little self-gift involved in uploading some pictures for your friends to look through (by themselves) or changing your profile from “single” to “dating” to announce an update in your social life. That is not to say friends can’t keep in touch with social media, but ultimately, their relationship has to exist outside of digital communication.

Pope Benedict noted with appreciation: “The concept of friendship has enjoyed a renewed prominence in the vocabulary of the new digital social networks that have emerged in the last few years.” However, he went on to warn: “It would be sad if our desire to sustain and develop online friendships were to be at the cost of our availability to engage with our families, our neighbors, and those we meet in the daily reality of our places of work, education, and recreation.”

We have all seen this trend, and it has certainly grown since 2009! The person walking next to you on the sidewalk is too busy texting to smile at you and say good morning. Your son or daughter prefers Snapchat as a dinner companion instead of you. Your colleague spends lunch scrolling through Facebook instead of eating lunch with real human beings.

While the Facebook world did not create the world’s inability to create true relationships, it surely is not helping things. People who have difficulties forming true friendships are turning to the Internet, where they can collect friends and feel accepted. Sadly, that practice often backfires, when the anonymity of sites such as Twitter or even comment sections after articles can quickly turn to insults, abuse, and slander that people wouldn’t dare utter face-to-face. Too often these sites become divisive and alienating instead of being places of communion and unity.

I know I have been truly blessed with true friends. I had to say goodbye to one such friend this week, a recent tragedy in Nashville causing her to

have to relocate to the East Coast, and I realized that one or two *true* friends long distance are worth dozens and dozens of acquaintances closer to home. I should never take those true friendships for granted.

This is not a call to abandon social media. We need to take the Gospel to this new “digital continent,” and that is only possible if we understand the culture present on this new media. Pope Benedict likened it to the early disciples who had to understand the Greek and Roman world in order to evangelize the people there. He reminded us that “The proclamation of Christ in the world of new technologies requires a profound knowledge of this world if the technologies are to serve our mission adequately. It falls, in particular, to young people, who have an almost spontaneous affinity for the new means of communication, to take on the responsibility for the evangelization of this ‘digital continent.’”

But it’s also a reminder that true friendship is worth the effort and the time. Benedict ended his address with this encouragement: “Human hearts are yearning for a world where love endures, where gifts are shared, where unity is built, where freedom finds meaning in truth, and where identity is found in respectful communion. Our faith can respond to these expectations: may you become its heralds!”

Make your life one that is worthy of friendship. Aristotle said that true friendship is rare because good people are few. It’s time to change that. Become worthy of the friends you want. Even *one* true friend, who desires your good, who walks with you in virtue, who struggles with you on the path to heaven, is a grace worth the effort. ■

JOAN WATSON is the director of Adult Formation for the Diocese of Nashville. joanmwatson.com.

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Mourners gather around candles lit during a vigil after the deadly shooting at the Pulse Orlando nightclub.

LACK OF FRIENDS MAY LEAD TO VIOLENCE

On average, there are 1.37 school shootings each week of the school year across the United States. Overwhelmingly, these violent acts are perpetrated by isolated and angry young men.

NIOBE WAY

WHILE THERE'S a lot of talk about the need for tighter gun control and better treatment of the mentally ill, the roots of this horrifying trend in our schools go much deeper. Our culture prizes independence over human connection. It devalues and even discourages close friendships, particularly among boys and men. And our definitions of manhood emphasize aggression, toughness, and rugged individualism at the expense of girls, women, and relationships.

We know these aspects of our culture lie at the root of the problem not only because killers tell us so in their journals and media postings. The science has also been telling us so for decades. We simply aren't paying attention.

Neuroscientists, developmental psychologists, evolutionary anthropologists, primatologists, and health researchers agree: humans need and want close relationships, including friendships, and when they don't have them, there are serious physical and mental health consequences.

Social isolation weakens our immune system and makes us more susceptible to diseases like Alzheimer's, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and cancer, leading to death. Individuals with strong social networks have a 91 percent greater likelihood of survival compared to those with weak social networks. The risk of death for those with weak social networks is comparable with well-established risk factors like smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. It exceeds the influence of other risk factors such as physical inactivity and obesity. Furthermore, the hundreds of adoles-

cent boys in my research over the past 20 years make the direct link between not having close friendships—friendships in which “deep secrets” are shared—and going “wacko,” committing suicide, doing drugs, and “taking it out on others.” Isolation, the boys report, makes them feel inadequate, envious of others with better connections, and angry. This, in turn, leads them to thoughts of self- and other-directed violence.

And while over 85 percent of the boys in my studies report they have or want emotionally intimate male friendships, they also describe having difficulties, particularly during late adolescence, finding friends whom they can trust. They report feeling pressure to “man up,” and fear that expressing their desires for close male friendships will make them look “girly or gay.”

Just at the age of 15 to 16 years old, when boys begin to lose their close male friendships, the suicide rate for boys in the United States increases dramatically—to five times the rate for girls. Similar to girls and women, boys want and need close friendships and strong social networks to thrive. Our social connections are not simply feel-good issues; they are life-or-death issues.

Yet we, Americans, live in a “me, myself, and I” culture. We tell our children not to worry about what others think or feel, to rely on themselves and not trust others. We encourage them to separate from their loved ones in the name of maturity and, for boys, in the name of manhood. We implore our boys not to be “like a girl,” which is ironic, of course, because when boys do indeed “act like girls,” they often have close

male friendships and are less likely to pick up a gun and shoot people.

So what's the solution? Melinda Gates urged young people in a commencement speech to solve the problem of our growing disconnection by “deeply connecting” to others, to “see their humanity first—the one big thing that makes them the same as you, instead of the many things that make them different from you.” Martin Luther King Jr. made a similar call in 1965: “What we are facing today is the fact that through our scientific and technological genius we've made of this world a neighborhood. And now through our moral and ethical commitment we must make of it a brotherhood.”

The solution lies in our willingness to make a “moral and ethical commitment” for a brotherhood, a sisterhood, and a more humane community in which having high-quality relationships, including friendships, becomes the core component of our definitions of maturity and where our common humanity is recognized and nurtured.

We need to create a culture, in other words, where the “we” becomes more important than the “me.” Then we will have tighter gun-control laws, better care for the mentally ill, less loneliness, alienation, and violence. And we will have achieved the dream that so many of our religious, political, and social leaders have had for a very long time. ■

NIOBE WAY is a professor of applied psychology at New York University.

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PHOTO CREDIT: Page 34: www.npr.org, David Goldman/AP.



MAKING FRIENDS

THOMAS GROOME



THERE IS NO “sure fire” way to *make* friends. To begin with, real friends are always a gift—*gratia*—from God. But as always with God’s grace, friends come as both gift and responsibility. A joy, yes, *and* a lot of hard work—though well worth it.

The ideal is that our friendships not be out of duty (like with relatives), nor out of utility (for some advantage) but out of mutual affection and esteem. We need to like our friends and them to like us. Of course, only God, can “love us for our self alone” (Yeats). But we can aspire to such *agape*, and with practice get better at it. Here are ten steps that can help along the way.

- 1** Be assured that we all need friends to find happiness in life, that we cannot simply “keep to ourselves.” God made us as communal beings—to become friends.
- 2** Place yourself in situations where you are likely to make friends; go to social events, join a parish, club or organization.
- 3** Be willing to take the initiative. Choose someone with whom you would like to be friends, and then take the risk (yes, you could be rejected) and make the first move.
- 4** Begin by getting to know each other. Ask them about themselves, to tell you their “story”—how they’re doing, where they’re from, their interests (hobbies, music, teams). Be willing to listen well and likewise to share your own story.
- 5** As the friendship becomes less awkward, go deeper. Most good friends can “tell each other anything” but that takes time. Your risk-taking will encourage theirs.
- 6** Let your friends know that you have their back: that you’ll look out for them, go the extra mile when needed.
- 7** As friendships grow, be willing to confront your friends if necessary, especially if doing things dangerous to themselves or others; a good friend is never just a stand by.
- 8** When you make mistakes, admit them and ask forgiveness; likewise, be willing to forgive as needed; all of us need mercy.
- 9** Invest ongoing time and effort in your friendships; they are always a “work in progress.”
- 10** Pray for your friends and ask the grace needed to be good friends—thus growing in God’s love. ■

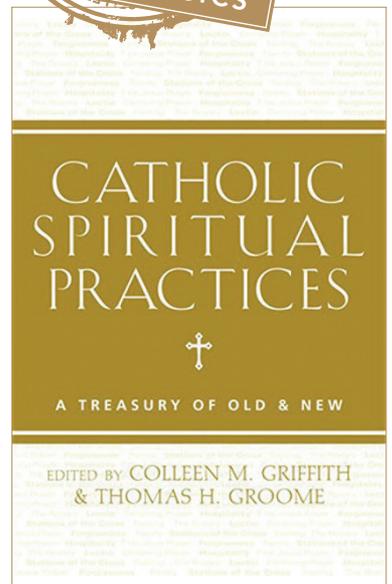
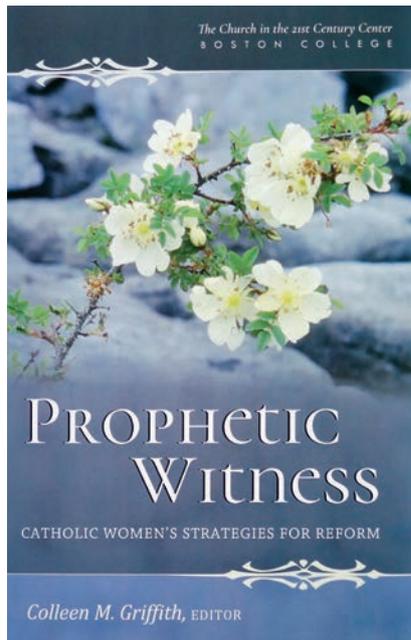
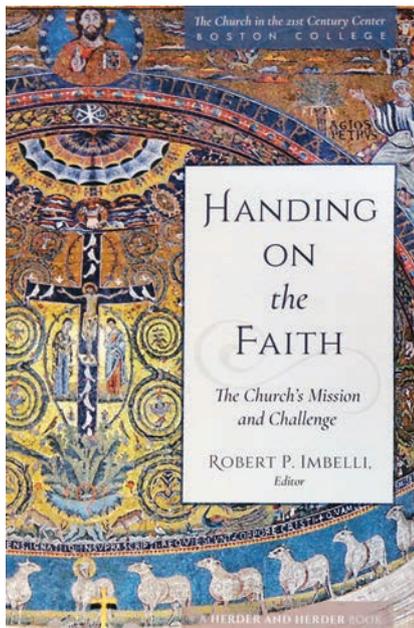
THOMAS GROOME is a professor of theology and religious education and the director of the Church in the 21st Century Center.

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