

Holy Friendships

by Father Antonio Royo Marin, O.P.

If Father Lacordaire once said that true friendship is a rare and divine thing, a sure mark of a noble soul, and one of the greatest rewards of true virtue. We read in Sacred Scripture that a faithful friend is a powerful protector and that he who has found such a friend has found a treasure. The truth of these statements is evident from daily experience. A virtuous friend is one of the greatest inspirations for the conquest of self and the practice of good.

True friendship is an alliance of souls who are united to do good. It is disinterested, generous, sincere and patient to the point of heroism. True friendship does not know the meaning of duplicity or hypocrisy; it does not deny the defects that exist in the friends, but it enables them to love each other in spite of their defects and weaknesses. Neither is it a sensual love, because the love of true friendship must be a love which seeks primarily, not the good of oneself, but the good of the other. That is why the love of friendship is synonymous with true charity.

Value of Friendship

There are three outstanding advantages which flow from a true and holy friendship. In the first place, a friend can be an intimate confidant to whom one can open his heart and receive advice and counsel when confronted with problems and doubts. Secondly, a friend can be a prudent and sympathetic corrector who will frankly point out one's defects and prevent many acts of imprudence. Thirdly, a friend will console in times of sorrow and will know how to select the proper words and remedies in times of trial.

If true friendship has been highly praised, even by pagan philosophers, as one of the greatest blessings in man's social life, it is reasonable to expect that it can be a powerful aid in the attainment of perfection. The struggle for perfection is the work of a lifetime, and it demands fidelity in the face of many obstacles. Even heroic souls have experienced the discouragement that comes from the recognition of the loftiness of the

goal and the weakness of human nature. The love of a friend who has the same high ideals can be a source of encouragement and inspiration in times of darkness. Such a friendship was manifested time and again in

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St. John

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'FEARLESS' THÉRÈSE

from her Story of a Soul

Influenza broke out in the monastery one month after Mother Genevieve's death. Two Sisters and myself were the only ones left on our feet. Never could I describe all the things I witnessed, what life appeared to be like, and everything that happened.

My nineteenth birthday was celebrated with a death, and this was soon followed by two other deaths. At this time I was all alone in the sacristy because the first in charge was seriously ill; I was the one who had to prepare for the burials, open the choir grilles for Mass, etc. God gave me very many graces making me strong at this time, and now I ask myself how I could have done all I did without experiencing fear. Death reigned supreme. The ones who were most ill were taken care of by those who could scarcely drag themselves around. As soon as a Sister breathed her last, we were obliged to leave her alone. One morning upon arising I had a presentiment that Sister Magdalene was dead; the dormitory was in darkness, and no one was coming out of the cells, I decided to enter Sister Magdalene's cell since the door was wide open. I saw her fully dressed and lying across her bed. I didn't have the least bit of fear. When I saw that she didn't have a blessed candle, I went to fetch one for her, along with a wreath of roses.

The night Mother Subprioress died I was all alone with the infirmarian. It's impossible to imagine the sad state of the community at this time; the ones who were up and about can give some idea of the conditions, but in the midst of this abandonment I felt that God was watching over us. It was without effort that the dying passed on to a better life, and immediately after their death an expression of joy and peace covered their faces and gave the impression almost that they were only asleep. Surely this was true because, after the image of this world has passed away, they will awaken to enjoy eternally the delights reserved for the Elect.

All through the time the community was undergoing this trial, I had the unspeakable consolation of receiving Holy Communion every day. Ah! This was sweet indeed! Jesus spoiled me for a long time, much longer

than He did His faithful spouses, for He permitted me to receive Him while the rest didn't have this same happiness. I was very fortunate, too, to touch the sacred vessels and to prepare the little linen cloths destined to come in contact with Jesus. I felt that I should be very fervent and recalled frequently these words spoken to a holy deacon: "You are to be holy, you who carry the vessels of the Lord."

I can't say that I frequently received consolations when making my thanksgivings after Mass; perhaps it is the time when I receive the least. However, I find this very understandable since I have offered myself to Jesus not as one desirous of her own consolation in His visit but simply to please Him who is giving Himself to me. When I am preparing for

Holy Communion, I picture my soul as a piece of land and I beg the Blessed Virgin to remove from

it any rubbish that would prevent it from being free; then I ask Her to set up a huge tent worthy of Heaven, adorning it with Her own jewelry; finally, I invite all the angels and saints to come and conduct a magnificent concert there. It seems to me that when Jesus descends into my heart He is content to find Himself so well received and I, too, am content. All this, however, does not prevent both distractions and sleepiness from visiting me, but at the end of the thanksgiving when I see that I've made it so badly I make a resolution to be thankful all through the rest of the day. You see, dear Mother, that I am far from being on the way of fear; I always find a way to be happy and to profit from my miseries; no doubt this does not displease Jesus since He seems to encourage me on this road. Contrary to my usual state of mind, one day I was a little disturbed when going to Communion; it seemed to me that God was not satisfied with me and I said to myself: Ah! If I receive only half a host today, this will cause me great sorrow, and I shall believe that Jesus comes regretfully into my heart. I approached, and oh, what joy! For the first time in my life I saw the priest take two hosts which were well separated from each other and place them on my tongue! You can understand my joy and the sweet tears of consolation I shed when beholding a mercy so great! †



St. Thérèse - The Carmelite

Anger

by Father Tonne

Perhaps you have heard this story of Pat. Among Pat's friends was one who had the habit of slapping him on the chest every time he met him. Without fail this would break the cigars in Pat's pocket. And without fail Pat would steam with anger. He determined to cure his chest-slapping friend. "I'll fix him. I'll teach him to break my cigars. I've got a stick of dynamite in my vest that he will hit the next time. I guess that will cure him of the habit all right."

Poor Pat did not figure that the dynamite would hurt him a great deal more than the other fellow. Neither does the man who gives in to anger realize that he is hurting himself much more than the person with whom he is angry. Carrying around a feel-

ing of hatred or nursing a grudge is like carrying around a stick of dynamite.

To be clear on this subject: What is anger? Anger is a feeling of displeasure at a real or supposed injury, with a desire of punishing the offender. If you are displeased because someone has really hurt you, then you are guilty of anger. If you imagine someone has hurt you, you are still guilty of anger. Anger is a strong passion or emotion of displeasure, and is against the Fifth Commandment; it is against the spirit of Christ. Anger is sinful under the following conditions:

1. Your anger is sinful if it is caused by a merely accidental injury. If someone, without realizing, said something or did something that hurt you, and you

are deeply displeased, you are guilty of anger.

2. If you are more displeased with the offender than with the offense, if you condemn the sinner more than the sin, then you are guilty of sinful anger.
3. Your anger is sinful if it tempts you to excessive punishment. If you want to hurt deeply, to strike, or even to kill the offender, you sin by anger.
4. If your feeling of displeasure turns into passion, and gets beyond the control of reason, it is seriously sinful. For instance, a parent curses and swears while correcting a child commits a sin of anger as well as cursing.

The greater your passion or displeasure, the greater your sin of anger. This sin is directly opposed to the spirit of Christ as He tells us: "Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment." Anger is numbered among the sins that ex-

clude from Heaven. (Gal. 5:20) It is the source and cause of many other sins like cursing, physical injury, misunderstanding and even murder.

Apart from its sinfulness, anger is a source of much harm. Just as the stick of dynamite in Pat's pocket would do more harm to him than to anybody else, so anger hurts the angry one most.

1. Anger makes men ridiculous in their looks, in their actions and in what they say. Watch an angry person. He does not flatter his appearance.
2. Anger harms the health. It causes certain diseases and sometimes leads to insanity. An exceedingly angry person is like one insane.
3. It makes one miserable and unhappy. It makes others miserable and unhappy. An angry man is like a wasp. In stinging others, he hurts himself.

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Father Gruner's travel schedule has been quite demanding this spring. Mid-February saw Father off to Italy for some meetings. Back a few days in March, he flew south to Florida for three rosary rallies. He will soon go to Brazil to make preparations for the next *The Only Way to World Peace* Conference, planned

for August of this year. Such long-distance travel can be grueling, as anyone who does long distance traveling knows. But Europe is an easy jaunt by comparison with Brazil: the former is only six hours by air; Brazil is ten hours!

Please ask Our Lady to fortify Father Gruner for all these trips, and to bless him and his work as he meets with clergy to prepare for the next conference. †

ANGER

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4. Anger breaks up families, destroys friendships, and makes one most unwelcome in company.
5. It blinds your thinking, clouds your intellect, and makes you unable to judge correctly. An angry man once threw a tomato at a famous speaker, missing him by a mile. The speaker called out: "You're too mad to throw straight." In fact, we can't do anything straight when we are angry.

Still, it seems that I have heard somewhere of "holy anger." Yes, there is such a thing as lawful, or just and holy anger. In Ephesians 4:26 we read: "Be angry and sin not." When is anger not sinful? It is not sinful where there is only displeasure, with no desire to hurt; if there is dislike of the fault or sin of anger, and one is attempting to control it; if the angry person seeks to punish the hurt in a reasonable way.

Such anger rises from hatred of sin and wrong, whereas sinful anger rises from pride, from envy and jealousy. Think of the times you were angry. Why were you displeased? Some person or some thing thwarted you, got in your way, crossed you. Your pride was hurt. Realizing that anger is a sin,

and that it brings in its wake many serious spiritual and physical evils, how can we avoid it?

1. Pray for the strength to overcome that displeasure. Each morning ask for the grace to be meek that day.
2. Give yourself a little punishment every time.
3. Look ahead to the occasions of anger. Be on your guard in that game, in that circumstance.
4. Pray for and practice humility.
5. The very best means is the thought of Our Lord and His meek and humble life. Didn't Jesus tell us: "Learn of Me for I am meek and humble of heart"? (Matthew 11:29)

There above the high altar is the statue of the Sacred Heart, the Heart that was filled with love and patience and meekness. Look at that Heart, look deep down into It, and then make up your mind to be like It. Pray during this Mass, pray every day, pray especially when stirred to anger: "Jesus meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine." Amen. †

HOLY FRIENDSHIPS

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the dark days of persecution in the early Church and, it can safely be surmised that many of the Christians who walked calmly to their death were inspired in no small measure by the example and the fraternal love of their fellow Christians. Indeed, even the persecutors were forced to exclaim: "These Christians, see how they love one another!" Through all the centuries of the Church's existence there have been outstanding examples of holy friendship in the lives of the saints. †

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