

FRIENDSHIP IN PAULINUS OF NOLA AND AUGUSTINE

Friendship played a key role in the lives and thought of St. Paulinus of Nola and St. Augustine of Hippo, two Fathers of the Church who were contemporaries, and also friends. Paulinus's and Augustine's concepts of friendship have been studied in monographs; there are no other Fathers of whom this is true. But their ways of understanding friendship have never been compared¹).

Both Paulinus and Augustine cherished Christian friendship. Yet the very phrase "Christian friendship" is problematic. While Greek and Roman pagan authors wrote extensively on friendship, the concept plays no significant role in the Bible, and early Christian writers seldom even mention friendship. Christian reflection on friendship began only in the third century, and not until the late fourth did a distinctively Christian notion of friendship emerge — precisely with Paulinus and Augustine.

¹) The most important literature: Venantius NOLTE, *Augustins Freundschaftsideal in seinen Briefen. Unter Hereinbeziehung seiner Jugendfreundschaften gemäss den philosophischen Schriften und den Confessionen* (Cassiciacum, Band VI; Würzburg, 1939). Pierre FABRE, *Saint Paulin de Nole et l'amitié chrétienne* (Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, fascicule 167; Paris, 1949). Lukas VISCHER, "Das Problem der Freundschaft bei den Kirchenvätern. Basilius der Grosse, Gregor von Nazianz, und Chrysostomos", *Theologische Zeitschrift* 9 (1953) 173-200. Mary Aquinas McNAMARA, *Friendship in Saint Augustine* (Studia Friburgensia, new series, 20; Fribourg [Switzerland], 1958). Adele M. FISKE, "St. Augustine and Friendship", *Monastic Studies* 2 (1964) 127-135. John F. MONAGLE, "Friendship in St. Augustine's Biography: Classical Notion of Friendship", *Augustinian Studies* 2 (1971) 81-92. Luigi Franco PIZZOLATO, ed., *Agostino di Ippona: L'Amicizia cristiana. Antologia dalle opere e altri testi di Ambrogio di Milano, Gerolamo e Paolino di Nola* (Civiltà letteraria di Grecia e di Roma, Autori, Serie latina, 31; Torino, 1973). Idem, "L'amicizia in Sant' Agostino e il Laelius di Cicerone", *Vigiliae Christianae* 28 (1974) 203-15. Idem, "Interazione e compenetrazione di amicizia e carità in Sant' Agostino", in *Forma Futuri. Studi in onore del card. M. Pellegrino* (Torino, 1975), 856-67. W. GEERLINGS, "Das Freundschaftsideal Augustins", *Theologische Quartalschrift* 161 (1981), 265-74 (but cf. the sharp criticism of this article by T.J. van Bavel in the article following). Tarsicius J. van BAVEL, "The Influence of Cicero's Ideal of Friendship on Augustine", in *Augustiniana Traiectina*, ed. by J. den Boeft and J. van Oort (Paris, 1987), 59-72. Brian Patrick McGUIRE, *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience, 350-1250* (Cistercian Studies, 95; Kalamazoo, 1988). The following articles in encyclopedias are also helpful: E. VANSTEENBERGHE, "Amitié", *DSP* 1 (1937) 500-29; A. MÜLLER et al., "Freundschaft", *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* 2 (1972) 1105-14; Kurt TREU, "Freundschaft", *RAC* 8 (1972) 418-34; Jean LECLERCQ, "Amicizia nella vita religiosa", *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione* 1 (1974) 516-20; Heinz-Horst SCHREY, "Freundschaft", *TRE* 11 (1983) 590-99.

ANTIQUITY AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Greek and Latin literature offers examples of legendary friendships: Achilles and Patroclus in the *Iliad*, Orestes and Pylades in tragedy, Nisus and Euryalus in the *Aeneid*. By comparison, the friendship of David and Jonathan in the Old Testament, which the Fathers often appealed to, stands out because it is unique; nowhere else does the Bible depict a similar friendship²).

Antiquity also attests to historical friendships, like that between Cicero and Atticus. Horace's tribute to Vergil, *animae dimidium meae*, is justly famous³). Early Christianity knew a few close friendships, but they generally did not endure. The friendship of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus was at best strained in its last years, and the terrible end of the friendship of Jerome and Rufinus was a scandal to the whole Christian world. With few exceptions (perhaps Jerome and Paula, or John Chrysostom and Olympias, are examples), it is only in the Middle Ages and later that Christian friendships between men and women are acknowledged; familiar examples are Francis and Clare, or Francis de Sales and Jane Frances de Chantal.

Greek philosophers speculated extensively on friendship⁴). In all cases, the univocal sense of the word designated friendship between equals. Practically, this meant friendship between men, since a man and his wife were not considered equals. There are few exceptions, although Plato's *Symposium* suggests the possibility of friendship between men and women. Other uses of the term "friend" were by analogy. One example is in political titles, like "friend of Caesar" (see John 19: 12). Another is "friendship with God". Some pagan philosophers speculated on the possibility of friendship with God, but meant by it a one-sided human effort to become like the divine through good will or virtue. Christians who speculated on friendship with God often cited Exod 33: 11 LXX: "And the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, just as someone

²) Augustine (*Conf.* 4, 6, 11) mentions Orestes and Pylades. So does Gregory of Nazianzus in his panegyric on Basil of Caesarea (*Or.* 43, 22). Ambrose mentions David and Jonathan in *De officiis* 3, 22, 131. Ausonius, writing to Paulinus and pleading for his continued friendship, mentions five pairs of friends from myth, literature and history (*Ep.* 27, 34-50).

³) Horace, *Carm.* 1, 3, 8; Augustine cites it in *Conf.* 4, 6, 12.

⁴) The best-known extant treatments of friendship are Plato, *Lysis*; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, books 8 and 9; and Cicero, *Laelius, de amicitia*. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2, also reports some of Socrates's ideas on friendship. Among lost works, Theophrastus's three books on friendship seem to have been particularly influential.

will speak to his own friend". Irenaeus, for example, writes often of *philia theou*.

The Greek word *philia* is broader in meaning than the English "friendship" and described any principle of attraction. In ancient philosophical thought *philia* was first understood as a cosmological principle, then as metaphysical, and finally as a category in ethics.

The Presocratic philosophers spoke of friendship or *philia* as a principle of attraction that ordered the whole universe. Many aphorisms on friendship were attributed to Pythagoras, especially the oft-cited *koina ta philôn* and *philia-isotês*⁵.

In the *Lysis*, Plato portrayed Socrates discussing friendship and calling common assumptions about it into question. When the dialogue ends, the interlocutors say that they have not reached any satisfying conclusion; but Plato achieved a good deal in this dialogue. Much of it is a dialectic examination of *Odyssey* 17, 218: "As ever, God is leading like and like together", and thus an examination of the idea that friendship is based on the attraction of like for like, or, alternatively, on the attraction of opposites. (The idea that God Himself is the source of friendship, which the line from Homer suggests, remained undeveloped in the dialogue; it will first be Christian authors — and not all of them — who emphasize this aspect.) The interlocutors establish that neither likeness alone, nor unlikeness alone, can be the principle of friendship. In other words, Plato moves the concept of *philia* out of the cosmological realm and into the metaphysical. He establishes that friendship is not utilitarian. "Then what is truly loved is loved for the sake of nothing else that is loved?" Socrates asks; and his interlocutor answers, "True" (220B). This allows Plato to introduce a third element; he suggests that there is a *prôton philon* (219C), and asks whether the Good itself can be loved as a friend (220B). Thus friendship is not simply mutual attraction, but rather common attraction to something greater than either friend. Plato thereby establishes a new archetype for friendship: friends are those who are drawn to each other by something outside themselves; each pursues the Good. As in all Greek thought,

⁵) *Koina ta philôn* in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 8, 10; 10, 11; cited for example by Plato, *Lysis*, 207C; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8, 9, 1; Philo, *De Abraham* 235; *De uita Mosis*, 1, 156. Gregory of Nazianzus varies it often; see references in RAC 8, 429. The Fathers sometimes saw this aphorism reflected in Acts 4: 32. *Philia - isotês*, for example, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 8, 10, 33; Aristotle quotes it as *philotês - isotês* in *Nicomachean Ethics* 8, 5, 5.

however, the Good is impassive toward those who seek it; only the Christians will conceive of the Good as a loving Person.

Aristotle wrote one of the most significant treatises on friendship to survive from antiquity, devoting the entire eighth and ninth books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to the topic. He divides friendship into three kinds, according to its motive: it may be based on the useful (*chrêsimon*), the pleasurable (*hêdu*), or the good (*agathon*) (8, 2, 1). The first two sorts are inferior or accidental friendship, since by them a man seeks his own advantage or pleasure, whereas friendship based on virtue is friendship in the proper sense. Aristotle calls friendship mutual good will (8, 2, 3). True friendship consists in agreement on values, and perfect friendship is motivated by the Good (8, 3, 6-7). Aristotle put friendship wholly into the ethical realm, and made friendship the complement of justice and the condition for human, political association. In fact, the importance of justice recedes in the face of friendship; friends, Aristotle asserts, do not need justice, but just men still need friendship (8, 1, 4).

The concept of friendship was also significant in later philosophical schools. The Stoics counted friendship among the *officia media* and held that only the Wise Man was capable of true friendship. Epicurus taught that, while justice contributed nothing to happiness, friendship did. The Epicurean ideal of a life of leisured retirement among friends is well known.

Cicero dedicated a famous essay to friendship, the *Laelius, de amicitia*. Like Aristotle and many Roman thinkers, Cicero conceived of friendship primarily politically; friendship was the virtue of great statesmen. He insists that friendship can exist only among good men (5, 18) but rejects the Stoic restriction of true friendship to the Wise Man. He also proposes a famous definition of friendship, one that Augustine (among many others) will quote several times: *Est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium diuinarum humanarumque rerum cum beneuolentia et caritate consensio*⁶).

The New Testament offers no clear teaching on friendship. Jesus' parables make reference to friends and to this extent retain the common parlance of the Hellenistic world. Negatively, Jesus warns his followers that their friends will betray them (Luke 21: 16). Positive references to friendship are found mostly in Luke and John, especially Luke 12: 4, where Jesus calls his disciples "friends", and John 15: 13-15. The

⁶) *De amicitia* 6, 20; cited by Augustine in *C. Acad.* 3, 6, 13; *Ep.* 258, 1.

Fathers often quoted John 15: 14, "You are my friends if you do what I command you".

The fact that friendship has never been a significant topic in Christian ethics is often noted. The immediate explanation for this is that Christians, from the earliest days, thought of each other not as friends but as brethren, which scandalized some pagans but comforted the Christians themselves, as the Apologists attest. Origen and others hesitated to approve of friendship. Commenting on Jesus' words to Judas, "Friend, what have you come for?" he wrote: "In the Scriptures we know of no good man who is called by this name"⁷). The monastic tradition sometimes showed a similar reserve about friendship⁸).

Some Christian writers before Paulinus and Augustine took over Greek and Roman concepts of friendship and fitted them into Christian systems of thought without elaborating a specifically Christian notion of friendship. The two best examples of this tendency are Clement of Alexandria and Ambrose.

Clement of Alexandria mentions friendship (*philia*) in a passage in which he treats the imitation of God — that is, how the true Gnostic, as far as possible, imitates God⁹). Clement concludes that "the image of God is really the man who does good, whereby good is also done to him"¹⁰). This, Clement thinks, is the highest of the three forms of friendship, which are those based on virtue (*kat'aretên*), on compensation (*kat' amoibên*), and on intimacy (*ek sunêtheias*). The first springs from love (*agapê*) founded on reason, the second is a *philia* that results from favor (*charis*), and the third, variable and changeable, is based on pleasure. Clement quotes with approval Hippodamus the Pythagorean, who describes the three sorts of friendship as, successively, founded on knowledge of the gods, the gifts of men, and the pleasures of animals¹¹).

Ambrose follows Cicero in saying that there is only one sort of friendship, not three. He defined a friend as a second self, through a oneness of love and good will¹²). But friendship is a subordinate value. While friendship is superior to wealth, honors, and power, virtue is superior to friendship¹³). Ambrose writes movingly:

⁷) *Commentariorum series* 100 on Matt 26: 50 (GCS Origenes 11, 220).

⁸) See, for example, Cassian, *Conlatio* 16.

⁹) *Stromata* 2, 19, 101, 3 - 102, 4.

¹⁰) *Ibid.*, 2, 19, 102, 2.

¹¹) *Ibid.* 2, 19, 101, 3 - 102, 1.

¹²) *De Spiritu Sancto* 2, 154.

¹³) *De officiis* 3, 21, 124.

For what is a friend but a partner in love, to whom you unite and attach your soul, and with whom you blend, so that you desire to become one from being two; to whom you entrust yourself as to a second self, from whom you fear nothing, and from whom you demand nothing dishonorable for the sake of your own advantage?¹⁴)

Although he draws many of his illustrations from Scripture, and even writes a sentence about friendship with God based on John 15: 14 and 15¹⁵) Ambrose's concept of friendship is not essentially new.

Thus Clement and Ambrose continue the pagan, and classical, notion of friendship, centering attention on man himself, and what he does or how he benefits. For Clement, man may imitate God, but grace plays no role in the process. For Ambrose, a friend is a second self. Just as for the Greek and Roman philosophers, so too for Clement and Ambrose, friendship is ultimately a form of self-love; its essence lies in the benefits it brings to him who offers his friendship to another. Paulinus and Augustine suggest a radically new concept of friendship.

PAULINUS OF NOLA

The fulcrum of Paulinus's life (355 [or 354]-431) was his "conversion" — which meant, just as it did for Augustine, a decision to accept baptism and live the ascetical life¹⁶). Like Augustine, too, Paulinus was ordained a priest more or less unwillingly, and was later made a bishop.

Three characteristics distinguished Paulinus before his baptism: his education, his wealth, and his career. Paulinus was educated by Ausonius at Bordeaux and acquired some of his teacher's exquisite, if occasionally decadent, literary sensitivity. Anyone who pages through the works of Ausonius notices, alongside real achievements like the *Mosella*, much that is trivial and even mindless. Paulinus was also

¹⁴) *Ibid.* 3, 22, 133. Ambrose follows Cicero: "the real friend is, at it were, another self" (*De amicitia* 21, 80).

¹⁵) *De officiis* 3, 22, 135.

¹⁶) Wilhelm von Hartel published the critical edition of Paulinus's works in CSEL 29 and 30. There is a complete English translation of his works by P.G. Walsh in ACW 35, 36, and 40. On Paulinus, besides FABRE, *Paulin de Nole et l'amitié chrétienne*, see Joseph T. LIENHARD, *Paulinus of Nola and Early Western Monasticism* (Theophaneia, Band 28; Cologne and Bonn, 1977), and the bibliography there. Paulinus provides some information about himself in *Epp.* 3, 4 and 4, 3-4, and describes his conversion in detail in *Carm.* 21.

wealthy; Ausonius speaks of the *Paulini regna*, now broken up among a hundred owners (*Ep.* 27, 115-116). And Paulinus had been governor of Campania and suffect consul.

After his turn to the ascetical life, Paulinus exchanged his political career for the monastic life at Nola and his estates for a little vegetable garden. His wealth, and his wife's, were gone — sold, and the profits given to the poor; Ambrose exults in the shock that Paulinus's conversion will give the Roman aristocracy¹⁷). But Paulinus did not abandon his literary skills and interests; he applied them instead to Christian topics. Only, the Bible replaced Vergil and the other poets as his normative text.

When Paulinus settled at Nola he made it a center of nearly constant activity. Each year pilgrims crowded the shrine of St. Felix for Felix's feast on 14 January. During the rest of the year, too, other pilgrims came, and many of them were friends of Paulinus's. Melania the Elder and Nicetas of Remesiana are only the best known among them.

Paulinus made letter-writing one of his principal activities at Nola. The list of his correspondents is nearly equivalent to an index of Latin Christian ascetics in the late-fourth and early-fifth centuries. He continued his friendship with Sulpicius Severus, Martin of Tours' biographer, who lived in Gaul, and wrote to Victricius of Rouen, the missionary bishop there, as well as to Honoratus at Lérins. He corresponded with several African bishops: Augustine of Hippo, Alypius of Thagaste, Aurelius of Carthage, Profuturus of Cirta, and Severus of Milevis; the last two had been monks in Augustine's monastery at Hippo. He also wrote to Augustine's patron Romanianus and Romanianus's son Licentius who, as Augustine's pupil, had been at Cassiciacum. He corresponded with Jerome in Palestine, and with Pammachius, Jerome's agent in Rome. He had known Ambrose at Milan since 385 at the latest. Probably through Melania the Elder, he knew Rufinus of Aquileia. He had been snubbed by Pope Siricius and received graciously by Siricius's successor Anastasius. He wrote an epithalamium for Julian of Eclanum, Augustine's last and bitterest opponent. The list could easily be extended.

The terms Paulinus uses for friendship reflect his conviction about the significance of his conversion. He consistently rejects one word for friendship: namely, *amicitia*. For Paulinus, the word *amicitia* means

¹⁷) See Ambrose, *Ep.* 27 (formerly 58).

worldly or human friendship and cannot describe the new friendship in Christ. His regular terms for Christian friendship are *caritas* and *dilectio*.

In one passage Paulinus contrasts human with Christian friendship especially clearly:

For it is a long time, as you, my brother Sanctus, undoubtedly realize, since I began to love (*diligere*) you. And I have loved you continually, though not with that love that is of Christ (*dilectione quae Christi est*), but with the friendship of human intimacy (*familiaritatis humanae amicitia*), which has flattery on the lips but no root in the heart¹⁸).

Paulinus goes on to compare human friendship to a flower that quickly fades, or a house that is shaken by the wind, both obviously metaphors drawn from the New Testament¹⁹). Christian friendship, in contrast, has deep roots in the heart, and is built on the rock, which is Christ. This friendship is *caritas*.

The rejection of *amicitia* is equally clear in other letters. In a letter to Severus, Paulinus contrasts *amicitia* with Christian values several times. He writes:

In you I have been granted a distinctive gift: even that close friendship of our former life (*iunctissima prioris uitae amicitia*), when we still loved the things that through Christ we now reject, marked us as mutually predestined for each other in the love of Christ (*in caritate Christi*) (*Ep.* 11, 5).

And in the same letter:

[What shall we return to the Lord] for this grace, too, by which he joined you to me, both as most beloved in our earlier, worldly friendship (*in saeculari prius amicitia dilectissimum*), and, in His own affairs, as an inseparable companion and partner in spiritual brotherhood (*comitem atque consortem spiritali germanitate*). This I count a gift beyond price (*Ep.* 11, 1).

And again:

For where are my blood brothers now? Where are my former friendships (*amicitia uetus*)? Where are the companionships of old? (*Ep.* 11, 3).

¹⁸) *Ep.* 40, 2 to Sanctus and Amandus, tr. Walsh, but altered, as are all citations of Paulinus that follow.

¹⁹) Paulinus loved to work allusions to Scripture into every phrase; this was perhaps his way of demonstrating the sincerity of his conversion.

Similarly, Paulinus wrote to Eucher and Galla:

We have known each other not by human friendship but by divine grace (*non ... humana amicitia sed diuina gratia*), and it is by the bowels of Christ's love (*caritatis Christi*) that we are joined²⁰).

For Paulinus, *amicitia* always means merely human friendship, or at least never expresses the ideal of Christian friendship.

Nothing better illustrates Paulinus's decisive rejection of *amicitia* in favor of *caritas*, and the radical volte-face it implied, than the change in his friendship with Ausonius. After Paulinus had moved to Spain, about 389, Ausonius sent him four letters in verse, one each year. After four years had passed, Paulinus received three of them together, and composed an answer. Ausonius wrote once more, and Paulinus answered again²¹). That was the end of the correspondence; Ausonius died around 395.

In the course of the four years of Paulinus's apparent silence, Ausonius became convinced that Paulinus had rejected his friendship and wrote, "Paulinus, if you fear betrayal, and dread the crime of friendship with me, then let your Tanaquil know nothing of it"²²).

Paulinus's answer (*Carmen* 10) is decisive, even harsh, just as it is pained and apologetic. Paulinus insists that he has not rejected Ausonius's friendship, but must now judge it by a new criterion. "Hearts dedicated to Christ", he writes, "reject the Latin Muses and exclude Apollo" (*Carm.* 10, 20-21). Paulinus will no longer write the sort of poetry that Ausonius cherishes. "But now another power, a greater God, inspires my mind and demands another way of life" (*Carm.* 10, 29-30). Paulinus's closing words to Ausonius in this letter embody an ultimatum:

*Si placet hoc, gratare tui spe diuite amici:
si contra est, Christo tantum me linque probari*
(*Carm.* 10, 330-31).

In his answer to this hard letter, Ausonius complained that

²⁰) *Ep.* 51, 3. Other passages in which Paulinus rejects worldly friendship: *Ep.* 6, 2 to Augustine; 13, 2 to Pammachius; 17, 1 to Severus.

²¹) From 390 to 393, Ausonius wrote four letters to Paulinus. Two are lost; his *Epp.* 28 (from 291) and 29 (from 393) are extant. In 393, Paulinus answered with *Carm.* 10. In 394, Ausonius wrote *Ep.* 27, and Paulinus answered with *Carm.* 11.

²²) *Ep.* 28, 30-31. "Tanaquil" was Paulinus's wife Therasia, who may in fact have encouraged Paulinus to accept ascetical Christianity.

Paulinus would even break up classical friendships; he would separate Perithous from Theseus, Euryalus from Nisus, and Pylades from Orestes (*Ep.* 27, 34-36). Paulinus, Ausonius says, is unmindful of old friends and trusts in strangers (*Ep.* 27, 118), *peregrinis amicis*, perhaps an allusion to Christian monks.

Paulinus's answer, his last letter to Ausonius, softens the tone of *Carmen* 10 and apologizes for the impression of *crimen neglectae amicitiae*. Paulinus assures Ausonius that *dulcis amicitia* links the two men. But Paulinus's words belie his intentions; *amicitia* now has a wholly different meaning for him.

When Paulinus began to elaborate his notion of Christian friendship, he quietly reversed much of what Cicero had said about friendship. Only a few examples can be given here. Friends, Paulinus believes, need never see each other; what is important is that souls are joined²³). A friendship can be formed instantly, because it is Christ who begins it²⁴). Christian friendships last forever²⁵).

Moreover, Christians are united as friends not by their quest for an impersonal Good, but by their membership in one Church and all that this implies. Paulinus nowhere expresses this conviction more clearly than in a letter to Augustine:

Nor is it surprising that we are present to each other though apart, and acquainted though unknown to each other, for we are members of one body, we have one Head, we are steeped in one grace, we live by one Bread, we tread one path, we dwell in the same house. In short, in all that we are, by all the hope and faith in which we now stand fast, we press toward the future. We are one in the Lord's spirit and in His body. If we break away from this one body, we are nothing²⁶).

In the same vein, Paulinus wrote to Severus: "But now, through the kindness of Him 'who has made both one' (Eph. 2: 14) we two are one, because in the two of us there is one Spirit, and no separation, since we belong to one body" (*Ep.* 11, 5).

But the most distinctive characteristic of Christian friendship in Paulinus's thought is his conviction that God has predestined friends for each other from all eternity. In general terms, Paulinus sees

²³) *Epp.* 4, 1; 6, 3; 20, 1; 42, 1.

²⁴) *Ep.* 13, 2.

²⁵) *Epp.* 11, 2; 51, 3.

²⁶) *Ep.* 6, 2; see also *Epp.* 2, 3; 5, 9; 18, 1.

friendship as a grace bestowed by God. For example, he writes to Severus that it is by grace that God joined Severus to himself in friendship (*Ep.* 11, 1). He continues: "You are my brother, sprung from a better Father" (*Ep.* 11, 3), and "in place of parents and brethren and friends the Lord has given us you" (*Ep.* 11, 3). Paulinus and Severus are joined by God's intervention (*Ep.* 11, 5). Divine grace and Christ's love have joined friends together (*Ep.* 51, 3).

Paulinus mentions predestination explicitly, for example, when he writes to Alypius:

Undoubtedly this love (*caritas*) of yours has flowed down from Him who 'predestined (*praedestinavit*) us for Himself from the foundation of the world' (Eph. 1: 4), and in whom we were made before we were born. For 'not we ourselves but He made us' (Ps 99: 3), for He made all that is to be. So fashioned by His foreknowledge (*praescientia*) and His work, we have been joined together into identity of desires and the unity of faith, or the faith of unity, by the love that anticipates acquaintance (*praeueniente notitiam caritate*). Thus we know each other through the revealing Spirit before we see each other bodily (*Ep.* 3, 1).

Paulinus expresses himself just as clearly in a letter to Alypius, quoted once already:

In you I have been granted a distinctive gift: even that close friendship of our earlier life, when we still loved the things that through Christ we now reject, marked us as mutually predestined for each other (*praedestinos nos inuicem nobis*) in the love of Christ (*Ep.* 11, 5).

Thus Paulinus proposes a radically new concept of friendship. The pagans saw the essence of friendship in the fact that two men together both sought the same goal, ultimately a kind of self-love. For Paulinus, friendship is a gift bestowed by God, and comes to be because God has predestined it. When Paulinus conceives friendship as a grace, then its source lies outside the self. Friendship is now God's gracious gift and one realization of His salvific will. When Paulinus writes that friendships are predestined, he is saying that they are part of God's providential and salvific plan.

SAINT AUGUSTINE

John J. O'Meara has written of "one of the remarkable features of

Augustine's character — his capacity for making friends"²⁷). Even a superficial knowledge of Augustine's life makes clear how important friendship was to him. The theft of the pears, which Augustine describes so memorably in the second book of the *Confessions*, took place, he says, because bad companions influenced him; alone, he would never have stolen the pears. *O nimis inimica amicitia*, he calls it (2, 9, 17). In the fourth book of the *Confessions* he describes in equally moving terms the intense friendship he formed with an unnamed companion in Thagaste when he returned there after finishing his education in Carthage. The loss of this friend, who died after a year, drove him to leave Thagaste for Carthage and was another step in his journey back to God. At Cassiciacum Augustine was surrounded by friends, and one of his closest friends there, Alypius, was baptized along with him and Adeodatus by Ambrose on Easter night in 387. From Cassiciacum, too, came one of Augustine's longest meditations on friendship, in the first book of the *Soliloquies*. Augustine's ideas on friendship also influenced his plans for common life: first, the plan for a community of philosophers that he and his friends at Milan conceived²⁸), then the successive monasteries that Augustine founded and led: the monastic settlement in his native town of Thagaste, then the garden monastery at Hippo, and finally the bishop's house there, a clerical monastery. After Augustine was made a bishop reflection on friendship receded behind other concerns, but this does not mean that he lacked friends. To suggest only one example among many, the civil official Marcellinus, to whom Augustine dedicated the *City of God* as well as other works, was a friend close to Augustine's heart for many years.

Unlike Paulinus, Augustine never rejected the term *amicitia* for friendship. For Augustine, the term can designate natural friendship, or distinctly Christian friendship; it can represent the Greek concept of *philia*; it can mean love of the world; Augustine can speak of friendship with angels, and of friendship with Christ²⁹). But Augustine is clear on what the essence of friendship is. Christian friendship is the prime analogate. And such friendship has two aspects: relation and affection. Objectively or metaphysically, friendship is a relation between two

²⁷) *The Young Augustine: The Growth of St. Augustine's Mind up to His Conversion* (London, 1954) 86.

²⁸) *Conf.* 6, 14, 24.

²⁹) McNAMARA, *Friendship*, 194-96.

persons; put less coldly, the specific characteristic of friendship is reciprocity. To describe this reciprocity, Augustine often uses the word *redamare*, which Cicero coined to represent the Greek word *antiphilein*³⁰). To describe the subjective or psychological dimension of friendship, or the affection that it entails, Augustine employs terms like *amor*, *caritas*, *benevolentia*, and *dilectio*. In the *Soliloquies*, for example, he writes movingly of the joy of friendship, wondering whether it would interfere with his quest to know God and the soul (1, 9, 16).

A consideration of Augustine's concept of friendship must proceed historically³¹). There are two periods in its development. The first period extends from Cassiciacum to the writing of the *Confessions*, the second from the writing of the *Confessions* to the end of his life. For Augustine, friendship always meant the bond that unites two persons in mutual sympathy³²); that is the constant. The two periods are distinguished by his understanding of the source of that bond. In the first period he emphasizes human sympathy as the source; in the second, he understands that the bond is the gift of the Holy Spirit through grace.

In the earlier period, Augustine defines friendship in a purely classical way, often citing Cicero. This could not be clearer than in the *Contra Academicos*, where he writes that Cicero defined friendship *rectissime atque sanctissime*: "*si quidem amicitia rectissime atque sanctissime definita est rerum humanarum et diuinarum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio...*"³³). The classical understanding of friendship is also manifest in the *Soliloquies*. Augustine wants his friends to live, and to live with him, so that they might seek knowledge of their souls and of God, to gain wisdom (1, 12, 20). His friends are friends because they share his love for wisdom. Augustine says he loves Wisdom alone for its own sake, and everything else — life, leisure, and friends — on account of wisdom (1, 13, 22). Around 393 or 394 Augustine wrote that "friendship is effected by similar traits of character between one soul

³⁰) For example in *Conf.* 4, 8, 13 and 4, 9, 14. Cicero coins the word *redamare* in *De amicitia* 14, 49.

³¹) The main passages where Augustine treats friendship are these: *Soliloquia* 1, 2, 7-12, 22; *De diuersis quaestionibus* 83, q. 71, 5-7; *De fide rerum invisibilium* 2, 3 - 5, 8; *De catechizandis rudibus*, passim; *Confessiones* 4, 4, 7 - 14, 24; *De trinitate* 9, 6, 11; *In epistolam Iohannis ad Parthos* 8, 5; *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum* 1, 1; *De ciuitate Dei* 19, 8; *Epp.* 73 to Jerome; 130 to Proba, 4. 13-14; 192 to Celestine, later pope; 258 to Marcellinus.

³²) McNAMARA, *Friendship*, 193.

³³) *C. Acad.* 3, 6, 13, citing *De amicitia* 6, 20.

and another"³⁴); and a little later, "no man is known except through friendship"³⁵). Elsewhere, Augustine writes: "for he loves his friend truly who loves God in his friend — either because He is in him, or so that He might be in him"³⁶).

In one of the typically short but brilliant passages that occur so often in his writings, Augustine describes how friendship is experienced through the shared perception of beauty:

Is this not a common occurrence? When we are pointing out to those who have never seen them before some spacious and beautiful places, either in the cities or in the country, and which we had until then been passing by without taking any pleasure in them because we see them often, our own delight is renewed by their delight at the newness of the scene. And the closer they are as friends, the more this is true. For in proportion as we are in them through the bond of love, the things that were old become new to us³⁷).

Augustine's dissatisfaction with the classical notion of friendship begins to appear in the interesting letter 258. The letter cannot be dated exactly, but Augustine probably wrote it not long after he returned to Africa, almost certainly before he was ordained a bishop. It is addressed to Marcianus, who had been one of Augustine's companions before his baptism; he is known only from this letter. Now Marcianus, too, has declared himself a Christian; but, following a familiar pattern, he is reluctant to receive baptism. Augustine's goal in the letter is to convince Marcianus to receive the sacraments. Augustine again quotes Cicero's definition of friendship, but then begins to reflect on it. He and Marcianus can be true friends now, and only now, because they agree on things divine: "between those friends who disagree about divine things, there can be no full and true agreement about human things, either" (*Ep.* 258, 2). Later in the letter, quoting Cicero's definition a second time, Augustine supplements it; friendship is *rerum humanarum et diuinarum ... consensio in Christo Iesu domino nostro uerissima pace nostra* (*Ep.* 258, 4). He then explains Cicero's *rerum humanarum et diuinarum* by quoting the two great commandments (Mark 12: 29-31 par). Those who observe the first great commandment, he writes, agree on divine things; and, in observing the second, there is agreement on

³⁴) *De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus* 16 (CSEL 28, 1, 500).

³⁵) *De diuersis quaestionibus* 83, q. 71, 5.

³⁶) *Sermo* 336, 2, 2 (PL 38, 1472). The sermon cannot be dated.

³⁷) *De catechizandis rudibus* 12, 17.

human things. The comparison is quite revealing. Cicero thought of intellectual agreement; Augustine thinks of agreement in will and in action.

The second period began when Augustine wrote the *Confessions*. The *Confessions* mark the point at which Augustine finally understood the full significance of the events that led up to his baptism — namely, that it was God's grace, and not his own choices and decisions, that had brought him, step by step, to this act of saving humility. The same insight also gave Augustine a new understanding of friendship. From the writing of the *Confessions* on, Augustine emphasizes grace, or the Holy Spirit, as the cause of the sympathy that is friendship. Augustine does not so much reject his earlier definition of friendship as come to understand that the sympathy between two friends has an agent cause beyond itself.

In the long meditation on friendship in the fourth book of the *Confessions*, Augustine proposes his new and distinctly Christian definition of friendship. He writes: "There is no true friendship unless You establish it as a bond between souls that cleave to each other through the love poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us"³⁸). McNamara, in her study of friendship in Augustine, calls this definition Augustine's "most original contribution to the idea of friendship"³⁹). The characteristics of Christian friendship are expressed here with clarity and beauty. It is God who causes the friendship, who "establishes it as a bond". Specifically, the cause of friendship is the love that the Holy Spirit pours out into the hearts of believers. To make this point, Augustine quotes Rom 5: 5, a passage that will be crucial to his doctrine of grace⁴⁰).

With this definition, however, Augustine risks simply equating Christian friendship with fraternal charity. And in many ways, he acquiesces in this understanding. He writes, for example: "Whenever you love a brother, you love a friend"⁴¹). Similarly, Augustine wrote to Pope Boniface in 420: "For what else is friendship? It received its name from no other source than love, and it is faithful nowhere, except in Christ, in whom alone it can also be eternal and blessed"⁴²).

³⁸) *Conf.* 4, 4, 7, quoting Rom 5: 5.

³⁹) *Friendship*, 225.

⁴⁰) See, for example, *De spiritu et littera* 3, 5. In the course of the Pelagian controversy Augustine cites Rom 5: 5 repeatedly, convinced that it is the most effective refutation of Pelagianism to be found in the Scriptures. We cannot love God, he insists, by our own free choice, but only through the Holy Spirit who is given to us.

⁴¹) *In ep. Ioh.* 10, 7.

⁴²) *C. duas epp. Pelagii* 1, 1.

But Augustine never abandoned the element of affection as characteristic of friendship between two Christians, a characteristic that distinguished Christian friendship from fraternal charity. One of the clearest — and most appropriate — examples of Augustine's conviction that friendship was more than *christiana caritas* is a comparison of his relations with Jerome and Paulinus⁴³). The well-known and often amusing exchange of letters between Augustine and Jerome clearly portrays the required *caritas*, but it reveals just as clearly the absence of any personal attraction or warmth between the two men. In contrast, Augustine's early letters to Paulinus show how personally appealing Augustine found Paulinus. Even allowing for rhetorical exaggeration, Augustine's expressions of affection for Paulinus are remarkable. In his first letter to Paulinus, for example, he wrote: "Then why does longing for you torment me in my soul within?" (Ep. 27, 1). Paulinus had insisted to Augustine that it was more important to know his soul than to see his face (Ep. 6, 3). Augustine answered:

If I had made your acquaintance, my brother whom I love, such a great and distinguished man in the Lord, anywhere in your earthly city, do you think I would have felt no grief if I were not permitted to see your house? Then how can I not grieve when I do not see your face? It is the house of your soul, which I know like my own (Ep. 27, 1).

In his next letter to Paulinus Augustine quotes Paulinus's own words back to him (Ep. 6, 2, quoted above) and then comments: "We are holy brothers, beloved by God, and members of each other; who could doubt that we are quickened by one Spirit, except one who does not perceive the love that binds us together?" (Ep. 31, 3).

The distinction that Augustine expressed in practice in his strikingly different attitudes to Jerome and Paulinus he also stated theoretically in his letter to Proba, written around 412. Christian charity, he wrote, is due to all; but the true joy of friendship comes only from those whose love is mutual. The Latin is worth noting:

itemque amicitia non angustis finibus terminanda est; omnes enim, quibus amor et dilectio debetur, amplectitur, quamvis in alios propensius in alios suspensius inclinetur; peruenit autem usque ad inimicos, pro quibus etiam orare praecipimur. ita nemo est in genere humano, cui non dilectio etsi non pro mutua caritate pro ipsa tamen

⁴³) Nolte (*Augustins Freundschaftsideal*, 55-81, esp. 66-68) is helpful on this point.

communis naturae societate debeat. sed hi nos multum iusteque delectant, a quibus uicissim sancte casteque diligimur (Ep. 130, 6, 13).

What friendship adds to Christian charity, therefore, is an *inclinatio*, an attraction or a liking that, Augustine admits, we experience *propensius*, more eagerly, toward some and *suspensius*, rather hesitantly at best, toward others. Christian charity is the *amor et dilectio* owed to all. Friendship adds the notes of reciprocity and joy; it is *mutua caritas*, and a *dilectio* that is also a *delectatio*, a delight.

In a letter written in 418 Augustine expresses the same sentiment. He is speaking of *caritas*: "How can we refuse to friends what we owe even to enemies? But to enemies it is paid out cautiously; to friends, it is repaid confidently" (*sed inimicis cauta impenditur, amicis secunda rependitur*) (Ep. 192, 1).

Augustine's love for friendship never diminished; if anything, it became more intense as his life drew to its close. Near the end of the *City of God*, as he finished the *magnum opus et arduum* that was both the book and his life, he wrote: "What consoles us in this human society, so full of errors and hardships, except unfeigned faith and the mutual love of good and true friends?"⁴⁴).

CONCLUSION

Paulinus and Augustine concurred on the nature of friendship. For both of them, Christian friendship was the only true sort. Both agreed that it is a gift of God, a grace. In Paulinus's mind, God joins friends together by grace; friends are given us by the Lord; divine grace and Christ's love have joined friends together. Augustine interprets friendship as one instance of the love poured out into men's hearts by the Holy Spirit, the love that Rom 5: 5 spoke of so eloquently.

Paulinus also adds a note that Augustine never did — that is, the conviction that God in His foreknowledge predestined friends for each other from all eternity. On the surface, it seems surprising that Paulinus, and not Augustine, should speak of predestination. But Paulinus's affirmation is no more than that, a simple affirmation; it is not part of a theologically elaborated doctrine of election and predestination. And Augustine, when he begins to work out his

⁴⁴) *De ciu. Dei* 19, 8. The whole chapter is a beautiful tribute to friendship.

doctrine of predestination, is seldom concerned with special instances like friendship.

When Paulinus and Augustine see friendship as a grace, a gift, they set themselves off from ancient philosophical thought and from those Christians who simply took over that thought. In the philosophical conception, friendship arose between two persons who were joined in the pursuit of a common goal, be it an ordered state or the very Good itself. Whatever the case, they are the agents. Proceeding from the Christian understanding of divine Providence, and hence from a conception of the universe as ordered, intelligible, and good, Paulinus and Augustine make God the agent and the two friends the recipients of God's gift. Friendship thus conceived is truly something new, a point Paulinus makes when he decisively rejects the term *amicitia* as a name for Christian friendship.

To some extent, the differences between Paulinus and Augustine on the notion of friendship flow from their differing personalities. Paulinus had been wealthy, a member of the highest classes of Roman society. He was trained as a poet; he was not a speculative thinker. Once he made his decision to live as a monk, he quietly and confidently lived out this life as he understood it. Doubt, controversy, and passion played no part in his life. Augustine was quite different. His family was far from wealthy, and had no significant social standing. He was trained in rhetoric, dialectic, and philosophy. Passion was very much a part of his life. Paulinus was content with a purely spiritual understanding of friendship. Augustine always held on to the human aspect of friendship, to human affection, to the *inclinatio*, to the *delectatio* added to *dilectio*. If friendship has both a metaphysical dimension — relation or reciprocity — and a psychological dimension — affection — then Augustine, in his mature thought, treated *christiana caritas* as the metaphysical dimension of friendship and equated it with fraternal charity. But he also held on to the affective dimension; he found it easier to bestow his love on some than on others. Augustine never made his ideas simple by ignoring his experience, and his experience taught him that friendship meant a good deal more than fraternal charity.

Both Paulinus and Augustine left to the Christian world impressive monuments to the value of friendship; and together, these two friends, who never saw each other, elaborated — for the West, at least — the first truly Christian concept of friendship.