

'NATURAL' and 'SPIRITUAL' RELATIONSHIPS IN AUGUSTINE

Is there in Augustine a contrast between the general commandment "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mt 22:39) and the text "If anyone comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:26)? More than one author is perplexed by Augustine's comments on these texts. O. O'Donovan writes: "A characteristic difficulty for any theory of universal love is that of 'proximate relationships': friends, family, colleagues, fellow-Christians, and others. If we are to extend our love to all on the basis of humanity alone, irrespective of how they are related to us, do we not declare any preferential attachment illegitimate? At the time of *De vera religione* Augustine seems to have thought so, or at least, if not illegitimate, to have thought that they were forced upon us *faute de mieux* by the conditions of human fallenness. This opinion he later withdrew, recalling that even if man had remained in his Paradisal state, he would still have had wives and children, some of whom, by being his own and not other men's wives and children, would have made special claim on his regard. How could such claims be justified in terms of universal neighbor-love? And how could such a love tolerate the special requirements of 'love for the brethren'?"¹

There are more biblical texts connected to this question, which in itself is about the relationship between love of neighbour and love of God. Thus we have to take into consideration: Ex 20:12 (Eph 6:2-3 with the addition: *quod est mandatum primum in remissione*): "Honour your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that your God has given to you"; Mt 12:46-50 (Mk 3:31-35. Lk 8:19-21): "He was still speaking to the crowds when his mother and his brothers appeared; they were standing outside and were anxious to have a word with him. But to the man who told him this Jesus replied 'Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?' And stretching out his hand towards his disciples he said 'Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother'"; Mt 10:34-37

¹ O. O'DONOVAN, *The Problem of Self-love in St. Augustine*. New Haven - London, 1980, p. 122.

(Lk 12:51-53): "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth: it is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. Whoever loves son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me".²

What I intend to do in this article is to demonstrate that, although there is a clear evolution in Augustine's comments, there are also constant doctrinal aspects in his interpretation which he maintains till the end of his life. For the sake of convenience, I have followed the chronological order of the texts, although the dates of many texts remain uncertain.

I. TEXTS OF THE EARLIEST PERIOD

That Augustine appreciated good relationships based on love with his disciples appears from a text of *De ordine* (d. 386): "I beg you, if you owe some love to me, some intimate relationship (*necessitudo*)³, if you understand how much I love you, how I hold you in great esteem, how much the care for your behaviour harasses me, if I am worthy of not being neglected by you, if finally I am not lying ... by saying that I do not want more for myself than for you, give me your favour in return for all this".⁴ There he asserts moreover that we should hate nobody, and that we have to put into practice this rule: Do not do to another what you do not wish

² Other texts are: Jn 2:4 "Woman, what have I to do with you?"; Mt 23:9 "Call no one father upon earth, since God is your only Father"; Lk 9:59-60 "I will go and bury my father first"; Dt 33:9 "He who says to his father or mother: I do not know you, and does not recognize his children, he acknowledges your covenant"; Mt 19:29 "Everyone who has left his house, spouse, parents, brothers, or children for the sake of the heavenly kingdom will be repaid a hundred times over"; 1 Tm 5:8 "Anyone who does not look after his own relations, especially members of his own household, denies the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever".

³ The term *necessitudo* in the sense of "persons with whom one is closely connected" contains something from its original meaning "necessity, inevitableness", and is, as it were, a necessary connection.

⁴ *De ordine* I,10,29. CCL 29,104: "Nolite, obsecro vos, si quid mihi amoris, si quid necessitudinis debetis, si intellegitis, quantum vos diligam, quanti faciam, quantum me cura exagitet morum verstrorum, si dignus sum, quem non neglegatis, si denique deo teste non mentior, nihil me plus mihi optare quam vobis, rependite mihi beneficium ...".

to be done to you. He stresses also the importance of friendship.⁵ Interrogated by his own reason whether he loves his friends, Augustine answers: "Augustine: I said I love the soul, not animals. — Reason: Either your friends are not human beings or you do not love them, for the human being is an animal, and you said you did not love animals. — A.: Indeed they are human beings and I love them, not because they are animals but because they are human beings, that is, they have rational souls which I love even in robbers. I can love reason in any human person even while I justly hate the person who misuses what I love. I love my friends the more, the better they use their rational souls, or at all events the more they desire to use them well".⁶ This text reveals clearly intellectual or spiritual overtones because Augustine stresses that sense-knowledge of his friend Alypius is insignificant and that he desires by intellect a knowledge of his mind, where he is truly his friend. But there is also some truth in Augustine's statement, for friendship goes deeper than outward appearances. To his friend Nebridius he writes in 387: "If it is due to good fortune that a human being loves a human being, see how blessed I am in having these additional joys, and I hope such great goods will be richly increased. Truly, wise persons are the gift of fortune, the only ones who can rightly be called happy".⁷ In *De quantitate animae* (d. 387-388), we read that another human being, be it the most wise and perfect, should only be loved, imitated, and respected according to his merits and the right order. For we must only adore and worship God the creator.⁸ At the same time,

⁵ Ib. II,8,25. ib. 121: "In omni vero contractu atque conversatione cum hominibus satis est servare unum hoc vulgare proverbium: nemini faciant, quod pati nolunt ... In omni autem vita loco tempore amicos aut habeant aut habere instent".

⁶ *Soliloquia* I,2,7. CSEL 89,12. (d. 386-387): "R. Non igitur amas amicos tuos? A. Quo pacto eos possum amans animam non amare? R. Hoc modo ergo et pulices et cimices amas? A. Animam me amare dixi, non animalia. R. Aut homines non sunt amici tui aut eos non amas; omnis enim homo animal et animalia te non amare dixisti. A. Et homines sunt et eos amo, non eo quod animalia, sed eo quod homines sunt, id est ex eo quod rationales animas habent, quas amo etiam in latronibus ... Itaque tanto magis amo amicos meos, quanto magis bene utuntur anima rationali, vel certe quantum desiderant ea bene uti".

⁷ *Epist.* 3,5. CSEL 34/1,9: "At si in potestate fortunae est, ut hominem amet homo, vide quam beatus sim, qui de fortuitis tam multum gaudeo et talia bona, fateor, desidero mihi ubertim adlescere". In *Retractationes* I,1,2 and I,3,2. CCL 57,7 and 12, Augustine regrets his use of the word *fortuna* in his earliest works.

⁸ *De quantitate animae* 34,78. CSEL 89,227: "Homo autem quilibet alius, quamquam sapientissimus et perfectissimus, vel prorsus quaelibet anima rationis compos atque beatissima amanda tantummodo et imitanda est eique pro merito atque ordine, quod ei congruit, deferendum. Nam *Dominum deum tuum adorabis et illi soli servies*".

Augustine stresses that human fellowship or community should be highly valued.⁹

In *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* (d. 388) we find a reflection on the relationship between soul and body: "Of the two which I have mentioned, is the human being body alone or soul alone? For although they are two things, soul and body, and neither could be called human being were the other not present (for the body would not be human being if there were no soul, nor would the soul be human being were there no body animated by it), it might happen, nevertheless, that one of these would be looked upon and be spoken of as human being". Though Augustine does not wish to solve this difficult problem, he declares that neither the soul nor the body is our supreme good, but only God.¹⁰ The commandment to love God and ourselves does not exclude that there ought to be a bond of love among human beings. There is no surer step to or cradle of the love of God. Our Lord was not satisfied with giving only one commandment. Therefore, He gave us also the commandment of love of neighbour. Just as we ought to love God more than ourselves, so we must also lead our neighbours to God as the supreme good which we are pursuing. From the commandment of love of neighbour arise many obligations pertaining to the human community, about which it is difficult not to err.¹¹

⁹ Ib. 33,73. ib. 221: "... societatem humanam magni pendere nihilque velle alteri, quod sibi nolit accidere". Cf. *De diversis quaestionibus* 83, q. 30. CCL 44/A,39: "... utitur etiam ceteris rationalibus animantibus ad societatem".

¹⁰ *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 4,6. CSEL 90,8-9: "... cum inter omnes paene constet ... ex anima et corpore nos esse compositos, quid est ipse homo utrumque horum quae nominavi, an corpus tantummodo an tantummodo anima. Quamquam enim duo sint anima et corpus neutrum homo vocaretur, si non esset alterum - nam neque corpus homo esset, si anima non esset nec rursus anima homo, si ea corpus non animaretur - fieri tamen potest ut unum horum et habeatur homo et vocetur ... Difficile est istam controversiam diiudicare ... quod aut corpori simul et animae aut soli animae optimum est, id est hominis optimum". As appears from *De civitate dei* XIX,3. CCL 48,662, this text goes back to a lost work of Varro; see J.K. COYLE, *Augustine's "De moribus ecclesiae catholicae"*. Fribourg (Sw.) 1978, p. 312-315.

¹¹ *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 26,48-50. CSEL 90,53-55: "Quid? Inter ipsos homines nullumne esse amoris vinculum debet? Immo vero ita debet, ut nullus certior gradus ad amorem dei fieri posse credatur quam hominis erga hominem caritas. Promat nobis ergo alterum praeceptum ipse dominus, de vitae praeceptis interrogatus: non enim contentus fuit uno, qui sciret aliud deum esse, aliud hominem; atque interesse tantum, quantum inter eum qui creavit, et id quod ad creatoris similitudinem creatum est. Dicit ergo secundum praeceptum esse: *Diliges proximum tamquam te ipsum*. Te autem ipsum salubriter diligis, si plus quam te diligis deum. Quod ergo agis tecum, id agendum cum proximo est; hoc est, ut ipse etiam perfecto amore diligat deum ... Ex hoc praecepto nascuntur officia societatis humanae, in quibus non errare difficile est ... Quis ignorat quam multa, et quanti ponderis, verba in illis libris de caritate proximi usquequaque

Augustine described love of neighbour in this passage as *gradus* (step, stage, degree) and *cunabula* (cradle) of the love of God.¹² But does this mean that these terms signify that love of neighbour is no more than a human preparation or means to the love of God? It seems to me that they indicate a certain participation in the love of God. This can be deduced from Augustine's statement in the same context that he does not know which of these two loves comes first to the fullness of perfection, or whether they do so together. But for him the main point is that no one who despises the neighbour, will arrive at God.¹³ Here, we must take into account that Augustine maintains that there are degrees in virtue, which would be impossible if the virtue would not yet exist. Moreover, the image of a cradle indicates that the newborn is already really present, but should still grow.¹⁴ There are still other texts suggesting that love of neighbour and love of God are more closely connected than a means completely different from its end. Love of neighbour demands great understanding and prudence which are not based on our own power, but given by God (*qua nemo uti potest nisi deus tribuerit*).¹⁵ God is said to be perceived acting through us when we love the neighbour as we should (*deum per nos agere intellegamus*).¹⁶ If we see that the same charity (*eandem charitatem*) is

diffusa sint? ... ista sunt quasi cunabula caritatis dei, quibus diligimus proximum".

¹² The same statement is found in *De musica* VI,14,46. PL 32,1187 (d.391): "A dilectione autem proximi ... certissimus gradus fit nobis, ut inhaereamus Deo" and in *Contra Adimantum* 6. CSEL 25/1,126: "dilectio proximi certus gradus est ad dilectionem dei". After that date (about 393), this formulation does no longer occur. In the earliest writings, *cunabula* in a similar sense occurs only once more as a description of the authority of Holy Scripture or Christ (*auctoritatis cunabula*) in *De ordine* II,9,26. CCL 29,122.

¹³ *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 26,51. ib. 55: "Sed nescio quomodo aut pariter ista in plenitudinem perfectionemque consurgunt, aut inchoatur prius dei amor, et prius perficitur proximi ... Quoquo modo autem res se habeat, illud maxime tenendum est, ne si quisquam credat, contempto proximo, ad beatitudinem et ad deum quem diligit esse venturum".

¹⁴ The emphasis on degrees in virtue is probably directed against the stoic contention that all virtue (and consequently all vice) is equal. Cf. *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 14,24. ib. 28: "Quanto enim melius atque diffusius diffamatur (sc. gloria dei), tanto diligitur et amatur ardentius. Quod cum fit, nihil aliud ab humano genere quam certo et constanti gradu in optimam vitam et beatissimam pergatur". Ib. 28,56. ib. 59-60: "Agit ergo his gradibus, quod ad animum pertinet, ut primo timeat deinde diligit deum". See also *De diversis quaestionibus* 83, q. 53,1. CCL 44/A,85-87. *De sermone domini in monte* I,21,70. CCL 35,78-79. Regarding *cunabula*, J.K. COYLE, o.c., p. 388-389 remarks that this expression forms part of Augustine's view of himself as newborn in the faith. Cf. *Confessiones* V,5,9. CCL 27,61: "... sed etiam talis infirmitas in fidei cunabulis caritate matre sustinetur".

¹⁵ *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 26,51. CSEL 90,55.

¹⁶ *De quantitate animae* 34,78. CSEL 89,227.

contained in the double commandment, we understand that one comes to the tree of life not only by the endurance of temporal troubles, but also by the fullness of knowledge, that is, by charity.¹⁷ If we want to be unconquered, we ought to love even our enemies, for a human being is not unconquered by himself, but by the unchangeable law.¹⁸

We should do no evil to a neighbour, for nothing is nearer to a human being than another human being. Good will alone does not suffice, love demands also corporeal works of mercy. "The human being as it appears to us is a rational soul, making use of a mortal and earthly body. Therefore, the person who loves the neighbour does good partly for the body and partly for the soul of the human being. What benefits the body is termed medicine¹⁹, and what benefits the soul, instruction. But I call here medicine anything which preserves or restores the health of the body. It includes not only what pertains to the art of those properly called physicians, but also food and drink, clothing and shelter, and all those things that protect the body against external blows or mishaps. For hunger and thirst, cold and heat, and every injury inflicted from without threaten the bodily health that we are now considering." There might exist so wise persons, however, that they are free from all painful emotion. At this moment, being free from emotions is for Augustine an ideal situation, but the control of emotions should never lead to insensitivity: "Some foolish individuals shun the exercise of mercy as though it were a vice because the sense of duty does not sufficiently move them if they are not, at the same time, moved by emotion. Consequently, they become frozen in a state of rigid insensitivity rather than serene in the tranquillity of reason". Love of neighbour consists in making others healthy in both body and soul, but the care of the body is always ordered to the health of the soul.²⁰ Speaking

¹⁷ *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 23,36. PL 34,215.

¹⁸ *De vera religione* 46,87. CCL 32,244. See R. CANNING, *The Unity of Love for God and Neighbour in St. Augustine*. Heverlee-Leuven 1993, p. 35-55. D. DIDEBERG, *Saint Augustin et la première épître de saint Jean. Une théologie de l'agapè*. Paris 1975, p. 138-139 criticizes rightly some of my earlier publications in which I have undervalued the significance of *gradus* and *cunabula*.

¹⁹ The stress on corporeal works of mercy (*medicina*) can be intended to refute the asceticism of the manichaeans forbidding all physical activity to the perfect. See J.K. COYLE, o.c., p. 347. 389-391. 415-416.

²⁰ *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 27,52-28,56. ib. 55-59: "Homo igitur, ut homini apparet, anima rationalis est mortali atque terreno utens corpore. Partim ergo corpori, partim vero animae hominis benefacit qui proximum diligit. Ad corpus quod pertinet, medicina nominata est, ad animam autem disciplina. Sed medicinam nunc voco, quicquid omnino corporis vel tuetur vel instaurat salutem. Ad hanc itaque pertinent non ea tantum quae ars eorum exhibet, qui proprie medici vocantur, sed etiam cibus et potus, tegmen et

about the teaching of the church, Augustine writes: "You set men over their wives, not to make playthings of the weaker sex, but in accordance with the laws of pure and honest love. You bind children to their parents in a kind of free servitude, and give parents a pious rule over their children. You unite brother to brother in a religious bond stronger and closer than that of blood. While preserving the ties of nature and free will, you unite all those related by kinship or marriage in a bond of mutual love ... In recollection of their first parents, you join citizen to citizen, nation to nation, and all human beings to each other, not merely in society, but in a kind of brotherhood".²¹

As a conclusion from the preceding texts, we can say that Augustine speaks clearly of a spiritual love for neighbour commanded by Christ and preached by the church, and not only of a purely human love as such. In this sense, I would like to correct Hultgren's affirmation that "l'amour du prochain ne s'élève jamais au-dessus la sphère humaine".²² It

tectum, defensio denique omnis atque munitio, qua nostrum corpus adversus etiam externos ictus casusque servatur; nam et fames et sitis et frigus et aestus et quicquid extrinsecus graviter infligitur salutem, de qua nunc agitur, manere non sinunt ... Stulti vero cum misericordiam quasi vitium devitant, quia officio satis moveri nequeunt, si nec perturbatione commoventur, congelascunt potius rigore inhumanitatis quam rationis tranquillitate serenantur ... Qui ergo diligit proximum, agit quantum potest ut salvus corpore salvusque animo sit, sed cura corporis ad sanitatem animi referenda est". My interpretation of the *stulti* differs a bit from that of G. HULTGREN, *Le commandement d'amour chez Augustin. Interprétation philosophique et théologique d'après les écrits de la période 386-400*. Paris 1939, p. 72 who writes: "Mais il est évident qu'il ne s'agit en la circonstance que d'une concession qu'il fait aux 'insensés' et aux 'indoctes'. A ses yeux, l'idéal est représenté par le 'sage' qui doit garder son calme et dont l'amour doit uniquement être dicté par le devoir" et p. 181: "Il est vrai qu'Augustin admet la douleur comme moteur de l'amour du prochain, mais seulement chez les 'insensés'". But in this way, the aspect of a reproach directed against the *stulti* is not done enough justice. Cf. *De vera religione* 47,91. CCL 32,247: "Et si quando forte alicuius periculo vel errore vel dolore commovetur, usque ad illius auxilium aut correctionem aut consolationem, non usque ad suam subversionem valere patitur". *De diversis quaestionibus* 83, q. 71,2. CCL 44/A,202: "Et ideo in huiusmodi affectionibus suscipienda est aliquantulum ipsa aegritudo, de qua vis per te alium liberari, et sic suscipienda, ut ad auxilium non ad aequalitatem miseriae valeat, quemadmodum se inclinat, qui manum iacenti porrigit".

²¹ *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 30,63. ib. 66-67: "Tu viros coniugibus non ad illudendum imbecilliores sexum sinceri amoris legibus praeficis. Tu parentibus filios libera quadam servitute subiungis, parentes filiis pia dominatione praeponis. Tu fratribus fratres religionis vinculo firmiore atque artiore quam sanguinis nectis. Tu omnem generis propinquitatem et affinitatis necessitudinem, servatis naturae voluntatisque nexibus, mutua caritate constringis ... Tu cives civibus, gentes gentibus et prorsus hominibus homines primorum parentum recordatione, non societate tantum sed quadam etiam fraternitate coniungis".

²² G. HULTGREN, o.c., p. 70.

is true that Augustine does not yet explicitly base love of neighbour on the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that we love God and the neighbour with the same divine love²³ (as will be the case a few years later), but Hultgren does not pay attention to the role and grace of Christ, whose example we should follow. And what Christ revealed has become the teaching of the church. In this sense, Augustine can say that human love nourishes and fortifies the soul clinging to the breast of the church, and makes it ready to follow God. Then, there can be a beginning of the revelation of God's majesty.²⁴ All things considered, love of God as the highest good does not exclude love of neighbour, but, on the contrary, includes it.

The first references to texts of the gospel (Mt 12:46-50; Jn 2:4; Lk 14:26) regarding human relationships are found in *De vera religione* (d. 390). To illustrate how the whole life of Jesus as a human being on this earth was a *disciplina morum*, reference is made to Mt 12:46-50: "Speaking to the multitudes as God, He refused to recognize his mother when her coming was announced, and yet, as the gospel says, He was obedient to his parents (Lk 2:51) ... When, as God, He was about to turn water into wine, He said: Woman, depart from me; 'What have I to do with you? My hour has not yet come' (Jn 2:4). But when his hour had come at the moment He should die as a human being, He recognized his mother from the cross and commended her to the disciple whom He loved more than the others (Jn 19:26-27) ... All the things we desired to possess, but prevented us to live in the right way, He did without and so made them of little value".²⁵

²³ Rom 5:5 "Caritas dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum" is quoted in *De moribus eccl. cath.* 13,23; 16,29 but only to demonstrate the divinity of the Holy Spirit. However, in *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 25,38. PL 34,216, charity is mentioned as the first among the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23), and this in a context dealing with love of neighbour, for just before this text Mt 25:40 "What you did to one of the least of mine, you did to me" is quoted.

²⁴ *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 30,64. CSEL 90,67: "Iam vero cum haec humana dilectio inhaerentem uberibus tuis nutriverit et roboraverit animum, sequendo deo factum idoneum; ubi eius maiestas ex tanta parte quanta homini, dum terrae huius inhabitator est, sufficit, aperire se coeperit ...".

²⁵ *De vera religione* 16,31. CCL 32,206: "Ita loquens ad turbas ut deus annuntiatam sibi matrem negavit et tamen, ut evangelium loquitur, puer parentibus subditus erat ... Item aquam in vinum conversurus ut deus dicit: Recede a me, *mulier*, *mihi et tibi quid est? Nondum venit hora mea*. Cum autem venisset hora, qua ut homo moreretur, de cruce cognitam matrem commendavit discipulo, quem prae caeteris diligebat ... omnia quae habere cupientes non recte vivebamus, carendo vilefecit".

A bit further in the same book, we find in the words *istas carnales necessitudines oderit* an allusion to the text of Lk 14:26, followed by an explanation in the same line as the text just quoted. "A human being is not to be loved by another human being like one loves corporeal brothers, sons, wives, kinsfolk, relatives, or fellow citizens. For this love is temporal. We would have no such relationships as are contingent upon birth and death, if our nature by remaining faithful to the commandments and in the image of God, would not have been relegated to the present corruption. Therefore, the Truth itself calls us back to the former and perfect nature and orders that we resist carnal habit²⁶ by teaching that nobody, who does not hate these carnal relationships, is fit for the Reign of God. It is not becoming that one considers this inhuman. It would be more inhuman not to love in a human being that he is a human being, but (only) to love that he is a son. This means not to love in him what belongs to God, but to love what belongs to oneself. What marvel if he who loves a private good instead of the common good, does not reach the Kingdom?²⁷ ... No one

²⁶ With regard to the expression "carnal habit", one must take into account that "habit" (*consuetudo*) is an augustinian term that draws the attention away from the "thing" to the "soul", from the "object" to the "person", for it is in the person that habit dwells. The human race has formed a habit of immersing in the world of the senses, often to the exclusion of the eternal world. See J.G. PRENDIVILLE, *The Development of the Idea of Habit in the Thought of Saint Augustine*, in: *Traditio* 28(1972) 29-99.

²⁷ Loving a private good instead of the common good means not reaching the Kingdom. The content of this idea is present in Augustine's writings from the very beginning, be it not always in the same wording. It plays a very important role in his theology. The opposition between *privatum* (*proprium*) and *commune* has clearly a theological meaning: to turn in on oneself, to become proud and selfsufficient, turning away from God. *De vera religione* 55,112. CCL 32,259: "Quisquis vero angelus excessus suos diligit et veritati esse subditus non vult et privato suo laetari cupiens a communi omnium bonorum et vera beatitudine lapsus est". What is true of some angels, is also true of human beings, fallen prey to pride: *De musica* VI,14,48 and 16,53. PL 32,1188 and 1190: "... universali lege neglecta in agenda quaedam privata cecidisse, quod dicitur apostatare a Deo". *De libero arbitrio* II,19,53. CCL 29,272: "Voluntas autem aversa ab incommutabili et communi bono, et conversa ad proprium bonum aut ad exterius aut ad inferius, peccat". Among the many later texts, see the beautiful passage from *De Genesi ad litt.* XI,15. CSEL 28/1,347-348: "Hi duo amores quorum ... alter socialis, alter privatus, alter communi utilitati consulens propter supernam societatem, alter etiam rem communem in potestatem propriam redigens propter adrogantem dominationem". Cf. *De civitate dei* XIV,28. CCL 48,451. According to R.J. O'CONNELL, *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386-391*. Cambridge (Mass.) 1968, p. 56, this theme is inspired by Plotinus, *Ennead* VI,4,12-5,10. W. THEILER, *Porphyrios und Augustin*, in: *Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus*. Berlin 1966, p. 195-196 and 207 believes in an influence of Porphyry without much evidence. About the theme *proprium* - *commune*, see also: R.J. TESKE, *The Aims of Augustine's Proof That God Truly Is*, in: *International Philosophical Quarterly* 26(1986), 253-268, especially p. 263-266. Cf. G. MADEC, in: *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* 6, 3e éd., Paris 1976, p. 544-545.

can perfectly love that to which we are called, if he does not hate that from which we are called back. We are called to the perfect human nature as God has created it before our sin. We are called back from love of what we deserved by sinning".²⁸

The *De vera religione* was addressed to Augustine's maecenas Romanianus in order to stimulate him to leave the manichaean sect and to return to the Christian religion, which is the only true religion. The purpose of this writing explains, I think, to a great extent its radical tone. Augustine is in the first place concerned about refuting manichaeism. Therefore, he defends strongly the goodness of all the creatures, from the lowest to the highest. God is the creator of the body and it possesses concord, peace, and beauty, although it is less than life. Before the human being sinned, it was *in suo genere optimum*, but became weak and mortal after the sin.²⁹ Even loved by a soul that neglects God, does not make the corporeal creature evil in itself. It is very easy to execrate the flesh, but very difficult not to be carnally minded.³⁰ The body of a newborn child is called beautiful and keenly loved by those who love it. Nevertheless, its mobile shape is not more pleasing than the life which causes the mobility. For if this living being loves us, it attracts us more strongly. If it were not

For the social interpretation of *privatum - commune*, see later when we deal with *De libero arbitrio*.

²⁸ *De vera religione* 46,88. CCL 32,244-245: "Sed nec sic quidem ab homine homo diligendus est, ut diliguntur carnales fratres vel filii vel coniuges vel quique cognati aut affines aut cives. Nam et ista dilectio temporalis est. Non enim ulla tales necessitudines habemus, quae nascendo et moriendo contingunt, si natura nostra in praeceptis et in imagine dei manens in istam corruptionem non relegaretur. Itaque ad pristinam perfectamque naturam nos ipsa veritas vocans praecipit, ut carnali consuetudini resistamus, docens neminem aptum esse regno dei, qui non istas carnales necessitudines oderit, neque hoc cuiquam inhumanum videri decet. Magis enim est inhumanum non amare in homine quod homo est, sed amare quod filius est. Hoc est enim non in eo amare illud, quod ad deum pertinet, sed amare illud, quod ad se pertinet. Quid ergo mirum, si ad regnum non pervenit, qui non communem, sed privatam rem diligit ... Nemo enim potest perfecte diligere quo vocamur, nisi oderit unde revocatur. Vocamur autem ad perfectam naturam humanam, qualem ante peccatum nostrum deus fecit. Revocamur autem ab eius dilectione, quam peccando meruimus". See *Retract.* I,13,8. CCL 57,40: "Hunc sensum prorsus improbo, quem iam et superius inprobavi in primo libro de Genesi contra Manicheos. Ad hoc enim ducit, ut credantur illi coniuges primi non generaturi posteros homines nisi peccassent".

²⁹ *Ib.* 11,21-23. 15,29. 45,83. CCL 32,200-201. 205. 242.

³⁰ *Ib.* 20,40. CCL 32,211-212: "Si autem diligatur ab anima, quae neglegit deum, ne sic quidem malum fit ipsa, sed quoniam peccatum malum est, quo ita diligitur ... Sed facillimum est execrari carnem, difficillimum autem non carnaliter sapere".

subject to corruption, it would be considered as the supreme beauty.³¹

Moreover, as a whole *De vera religione* reflects Augustine's experience of his own conversion. O. du Roy states: "Il faut se rappeler que c'est par une expérience personnelle et à la lumière seulement d'écrits néoplatoniciens qu'Augustin a découvert l'intériorité véritable et dépasse ainsi son impuissance à penser le spirituel".³² True religion consists in rejecting the world of the lower things of the senses, and orientating oneself to the highest spiritual good, namely God. This main idea is based upon the Pauline warning: Not to worship and serve creatures instead of the creator (cf. Rm 1:25). Thus Augustine proclaims the Christian doctrine using aspects of the best philosophy of his time, i.e. neoplatonism, which is not so surprising, because Augustine saw a concordance between some (not all) teachings of the neoplatonists and Christian doctrine, just as modern theologians use philosophical concepts to clarify the doctrine of faith. It is undeniable that Augustine refers to the ontological order as established by neoplatonist philosophers, but at the same time he sees here no contrast with the evangelical claim that God should be loved above all created things. In order to show this claim, in 16,31 (see text note 25, with references to Mt 12:46-50 and Jn 2:4), Augustine bases himself also on the example of Jesus. He explains these texts by making a distinction between the actions of Jesus as human being and as God: as God He did not recognize his mother (*ut deus matrem negavit*); as human being He did. But does this distinction not show a certain underdeveloped idea of the personal union of the two natures in Christ?³³ In the same way, it cannot be denied that Augustine's view on the relationship between soul and body in the human being, is not yet elaborated as it will be later. The soul possesses a body rather than that the person as a whole *is* body and soul, "Bodies are not what we are ... Human nature is to be loved without any condition of carnal relationship". What matters is the spiritual relationship as expressed by Mt 12:46-50: "All who love God and do his will, are

³¹ Ib. 40,74. CCL 32,236: "... nascitur corpus, quod formosum vocatur et a suis dilectoribus amatur acerrime. Non tamen in eo plus placet forma, quae movetur, quam vita, quae movet. Nam illud animal si nos amet, allicit violentius, si oderit autem, suscensemus et ferre non possumus ... Subiacet enim corruptioni. Quod si non esset, summa putaretur".

³² O. DU ROY, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin*. Paris, Etudes Augustiniennes, 1966, p. 366. See the whole section, p. 309-408. W. DESCH, *Aufbau und Gliederung von Augustins Schrift 'De vera religione'*, in: *Vigiliae Christianae* 35(1980) 263-277. F. VAN FLETEREN, *Augustine's 'De vera religione'. A New Approach*, in: *Augustinianum* 16(1976) 475-497.

³³ I think so, because the natures in Christ are more or less considered as independent principles of action. See T.J. VAN BAVEL, *Recherches sur la christologie de saint Augustin. L'humain et le divin dans le Christ d'après saint Augustin*. Fribourg 1954, p. 6-7.

related to one another under one God and Father. They are all fathers to one another when they take care for one another, they are sons to one another when they obey one another, and above all they are brothers because one Father by his testament calls them to one inheritance".³⁴

Although the text "Bodies are not what we are" can be explained in a benevolent way — for it is evident that we are more than bodies alone — such a statement remains very ambiguous, as appears from the following affirmation: "The human being cannot lose his neighbour whom he loves as himself, for he does not love even in himself the things that appear to the eyes or to any bodily sense. So he has present to himself the one he loves as himself".³⁵ R.J. Teske comments on this text: "As we shall see, Augustine interprets loving one's neighbor as oneself, not as meaning that one loves one's neighbor as much as oneself, but as meaning that one loves his neighbor as the sort of reality that one is, namely, a soul".³⁶ However, one can ask the question: what is here the meaning of the word "soul"? It seems neither to mean simply the natural principle of life nor its rational nature as such. It connotes rather the soul as related to the transcendent divine order. It is the soul that loves God, the unconquerable nature of our mind subject to God in whose image we are made, the soul that worships the most high God, and not itself.³⁷ Is this not the sense of Augustine's specification of the text "There could have been no error in religion, had not the soul worshipped in place of God either soul or body or its own phantasms" in his *Retractationes*? Augustine says that he meant by "soul" the whole incorporeal creation, and that this is expressed better a bit later "Let us not serve the creature rather than the

³⁴ *De vera religione* 46,89. CCL 32,245: "Qui ergo diligit aliquem tamquam se ipsum, hoc in eo debet diligere, quod sibi ipse est. Corpora vero non sunt, quod nos sumus. Non ergo in homine corpus est expetendum aut desiderandum ... Ipsa igitur natura humana sine carnali condicione diligenda est ... Omnes sub uno deo patre cognati sunt, qui eum diligunt et faciunt voluntatem ipsius, et invicem sibi sunt et patres, cum sibi consulunt, et filii, cum sibi obtemperant, et fratres maxime, quia eos unus pater testamento suo ad unam hereditatem vocat".

³⁵ *Ib.* 46,86. CCL 32,244: "Nec potest amittere proximum, quem diligit tamquam seipsum, quia neque in se ipso ea diligit, quae oculis subiacent aut ullis aliis corporis sensibus. Ergo apud se ipsum habet, quem diligit tamquam se ipsum".

³⁶ R.J. TESKE, *Love of Neighbor in St. Augustine*, in: *Atti III dello Congresso Internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI centenario della conversione*, Roma 1987, p. 85.

³⁷ *De vera religione* 20,40. 45,85. 47,90. CCL 32,211. 243. 246: "corporea creatura, si tantummodo possideatur ab anima, quae diligit deum"; "habet enim hoc animi nostri natura post deum, a quo ad eius imaginem factus est, sed eius erant praecepta servanda"; "in eo nihil praeter hominem diligit, id est creaturam dei ad eius imaginem factam". One should not consider the intellectual soul as divine neither adore the soul as the highest good: *ib.* 37,86. *ib.* 231.

creator ... By 'creature' I indicated by one word both spiritual and corporeal creation".³⁸ The true being of the human person consists in clinging to God.

The question is whether this would prevent us from loving our neighbour as he should be loved. According to G. Hultgren, in such a view love of neighbour not only completely loses its sensual, but also its individual and personal character.³⁹ It is true that Augustine employs in *De vera religione* a very spiritualized concept of love: "We should love a wise and perfect soul because it is wise and perfect, and a foolish soul not like it is, but because it has the possibility to become wise and perfect".⁴⁰ There is no stress on corporeal works of mercy. Some texts, however, point in that direction. Are such works implicitly presupposed? Augustine clearly rejects any merely utilitarian concept of love of neighbour: he who loves another as a beast of burden, or as the baths, or as a colourful or garrulous bird, does not love the other as a human being ought to be loved. He refers to the rule of love that one should wish that the other has the good things one wants to have oneself, and that the evils one wants to avoid oneself do not befall the other. This attitude must be observed towards all people, for no evil should be done to any and "love of neighbour cannot do any harm" (Rm 13:10).⁴¹ The most concrete text is the following one: "This person ... uses those whom he can for exercising beneficence to them, and uses all for exercising benevolence. Though he does not love temporal things, he himself uses rightly temporal things, and helps human beings according to

³⁸ *Retractationes* I,13,2. CCL 57,36-37: "Hic animam pro universa creatura incorporali posui non loquens more scripturarum ... Creaturam quippe uno nomine utramque, id est spiritalem corporalemque, significavi".

³⁹ G. HULTGREN, o.c., p. 175: "La notion d'amour devient ici extrêmement atténuée. La négation de la valeur éternelle des liens naturels a pour effet non seulement d'ôter à l'amour du prochain tout élément sensuel mais de lui enlever encore tout caractère individuel. Il y a lieu de se demander si l'on peut encore parler dans ce cas d'un amour personnel avec une personne comme sujet et une autre comme objet et s'il reste encore en lui quelque chose de la communauté naturelle. La communauté naturelle ... devient une forme vide de substance".

⁴⁰ *De vera religione* 48,93. CCL 32,248: "Sapientem animam atque perfectam talem diligat, qualem illam videt, stultam non talem, sed quia esse perfecta et sapiens potest, quia nec se ipsum debet stultum diligere".

⁴¹ Ib. 46,87. ib. 244: "Nam si vel ipsum hominem homo dilexerit non tamquam se ipsum, sed tamquam iumentum aut balneas aut aviculam pictam vel garrulam, id est ut ex eo aliquid temporalis voluptatis aut commodi capiat, serviat necesse est non homini, sed, quod est turpius, tam foedo et detestabili vitio, quo non amat hominem sicut homo amandus est".

the lot of each person, if he cannot treat them all alike".⁴² The reason why we cannot treat all our neighbours alike, is that in Augustine's thought material goods as well as the world of the senses are by nature limited. Therefore, they are intimately connected with the idea of *proprius* and *privatus*.

Although Augustine says that we should hate temporal relationships, he considers it as an injustice not to benefit those who are more closely related to us. Although we might more readily speak to an intimate (*familiarem*), it is because there is more trust and more time in such relationships (*apertiore temporis ianuam*), but not necessarily more love. If we understand "love" here in the strict sense Augustine attaches to this word, namely wishing and working for the total well-being of the other, I would not disagree with him.⁴³ The foregoing considerations, however, cannot prevent the impression of a serious underestimation of corporeal relationships. One aspect of this underestimation is corrected by Augustine himself in the *Retractationes* where he strongly disapproves that kinships and relationships between brothers, sons, spouses, relatives, and citizens would not have existed, if humankind had not sinned and had not be punished with death.⁴⁴

In *De musica* VI (dating in all probability from 391), Augustine writes that divine law forbids to lord it over other rational souls, which are nearest to us, and are associated to us and sharing the same condition with us under the same divine law.⁴⁵ There is an order of being imposed on us by God, and we have to keep that order. Consequently, there is a difference between kept by order and keep order. In other words: there is an objective and a subjective aspect in the realization of our love of God and

⁴² Ib. 47,91. ib. 246-247: "Hic vir ... utitur quibus potest ad beneficentiam, utitur omnibus ad benevolentiam. Et quamquam temporalia non diligit, ipse recte utitur temporalibus et pro eorum sorte hominibus consulit, si aequaliter non potest omnibus". *Consulo* has the meaning of performing actions for the good of another person.

⁴³ Ib. 47,91. ib. 247: "Quare si aliquem familiarium suorum promptius quam quemlibet alloquitur, non eum magis diligit, sed ad eum habet maiorem fiduciam et apertiore temporis ianuam ... Cum itaque omnibus, quos pariter diligit, prodesse non possit, nisi coniunctionibus prodesse malit, iniustus est". The same idea returns in later texts: *De doctrina christiana* I,28,29. CCL 32,22: "Omnes autem aequae diligendi sunt, sed cum omnibus prodesse non possis, his potissimum consulendum est, qui pro locorum et temporum vel quarumlibet rerum opportunitatibus constrictius tibi quasi quadam sorte iunguntur". *Epist.* 243,4 (see note 62) and *De civitate dei* XIX,14 (see note 110).

⁴⁴ *Retractationes* I,13,8. See text note 28.

⁴⁵ *De musica* VI,13,41. PL 32,1185: "Iste autem animae (sc. superbae) appetitus est sub se habere alias animas ... rationales, id est proximas suas, et sub eadem lege socias atque consortes".

of neighbour. In this way, a person can choose his or her body's health in order not to be hindered, and refer his or her actions to the benefit of the neighbour he or she has been invited to love as him or herself by virtue of the natural tie of equal right (*communis iuris*).⁴⁶ That soul keeps order that, with its whole self, loves God above itself, that is God and fellow souls (*socias animas*) as itself. But from the love of our neighbour, to so great extent as is commanded, arises a most certain degree to inhere in God, and not only to be kept by God's ordering, but also to keep our own order firm and sure.⁴⁷

II. THE TEXTS BETWEEN 391 AND 396

In *De libero arbitrio* (d. 388, but only completed about 395), Augustine deals with the tension between the eternal and the temporal law. The eternal law orders us to turn our love away from temporal things and to turn it to the eternal. The temporal law commands to possess these things in such a way that the peace and human society (*societas*) can be preserved. The body and its goods, such as good health, keen senses, strength, beauty and the like, occupy the first place among the temporal goods. Next there is freedom. And then there are parents, brothers, husband or wife, children, kindred (*propinqui*), relatives, friends (*familiares*), and those who are bound to us by a close connection (*necessitudo*). The person who uses these temporal goods rightly, proves that they are indeed goods; nevertheless, he or she should not be attached to them, and must be ready to possess and control them, and even more ready to lose and to do

⁴⁶ Ib. 14,45. ib. 1187: "Quandoquidem et salutem corporis ut non impediatur eligit, et omnes eas actiones ad utilitatem proximi revocat, quem propter communis juris naturale vinculum tanquam seipsum diligere iussus est". G. HULTGREN, o.c., p. 41 comments: "Cet amour des prochains n'est nullement motivé, comme pourraient le faire croire les termes de cette déclaration, par la parenté qui unit la race humaine ou par un lien analogue, mais il s'agit du droit à l'amour qui leur est dû à un degré égal en leur qualité d'âmes douées de raison". However, I think that we may not forget that this right comes from God as Augustine stresses in the context. Moreover, in *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 30,63 (see text note 21), we find expressions such as: "preserving the ties of nature" and "in recollection of their first parents".

⁴⁷ Ib. VI,14,46. ib. 1187: "Tenet ordinem, seipsa tota diligens quod supra se est, id est Deum, socias autem animas tanquam seipsam ... A dilectione autem proximi tanta quanta praecipitur, certissimus gradus fit nobis, ut inhaereamus Deo, et non teneamur tantum ordinatione illius, sed nostrum etiam ordinem inconcussum certumque teneamus".

without them. Neglecting eternal goods means behaving badly.⁴⁸ In the same work, Augustine repeatedly makes a distinction between private and common goods, an idea that plays an important role in his thought till the end of his life. Private is that which belongs to each of us alone, and which each of us perceives in himself, because it properly belongs to his nature. Common is that what is perceived by all perceivers with no corruption or change of the common good itself. When the will turns from an immutable, common good (in the strict sense of the word: God) to a changeable, private one, it is a sin.⁴⁹ Besides this theological interpretation of private and common good, we find a social interpretation that refers to the building up of human community. In order to exist a nation or a people needs that an individual prefers the public good to the private good.⁵⁰

In this period, the most extensive text is found in *De sermone domini in monte* (d. between 392-396). Augustine is at odds with the question how to reconcile Lk 14:26 "Whoever comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, and

⁴⁸ *De libero arbitrio* I,15,32-16,34. CCL 29,233-234: "Quid deinde censes temporalem iubere, nisi ut haec, quae ad tempus nostra dici possunt, quando eis homines cupiditate inherant, eo iure possideant quo pax et societas humana servetur, quanta in his rebus servari potest? Ea sunt autem primo hoc corpus et eius quae vocantur bona, ut integra valetudo, acumen sensuum, vires, pulchritudo et si qua sunt cetera ... deinde parentes, fratres, coniunx, liberi, propinqui, adfines, familiares et quicumque nobis aliqua necessitudine adiuncti sunt ... eis totus superferatur, et habere illa atque regere, cum opus est, paratus et amittere ac non habere paratior ... Quocirca licet nunc animadvertere et considerare utrum sit aliud male facere quam neglectis rebus aeternis ...".

⁴⁹ *Ib.* II,7,19-8,20. CCL 29,250: "Proprium ergo et quasi privatum intellegendum est quod unusquisque nostrum sibi est et quod in se solus sentit quod ad suam naturam proprie pertinet; commune autem et quasi publicum, quod ab omnibus sentientibus nulla sui corruptione atque commutatione sentitur ... Age, nunc attende, et dic mihi utrum inveniat aliquid quod omnes ratiocinantes sua quisque ratione atque mente communiter videant, cum illud quod videtur praesto sit omnibus nec in usum eorum quibus praesto est commutetur quasi cibus aut potio ...". See the whole passage till 15,39, *ib.* 263.

⁵⁰ *Ib.* I,6,14. CCL 29,219: "Ergo, si populus sit bene moderatus et gravis communisque utilitatis diligentissimus custos, in quo unusquisque minoris rem privatam quam publicam pendat ...". Cf. *De opere monachorum* 25,32. CSEL 41,579 (d. about 401): "Si enim huius terrenae rei publicae antiqui principes praeclarissimo litteratorum suorum eloquio praedicari solent, quod rem communem universi populi suae civitatis privatis suis rebus sic anteponebant, ut quidam eorum (sc. Scipio) Africa edomita triumphator quid nubenti filiae daret non habuerit, nisi ex senatu consulto de publico dotaretur: quo animo esse debet in republica sua civis aeternae illius civitatis Hierusalem caelestis ...". See CICERO, *De officiis* I,7,20: "Sed iustitiae primum munus est ut ne cui quis noceat ..., deinde ut communibus pro communibus utatur, privatis ut suis. Sunt autem privata nulla natura ...".

moreover his own life (*animam*), cannot be my disciple" with the prohibition of divorcing (Mt 5:32) and the commandment to love even one's enemies. The answer is: because the eternal kingdom does not have temporal relationships (*necessitudines temporales*) as appears from texts such as "There is male nor female" (Gal 3:28), "There Christ is all things and in all" (Col 3:11), "In the resurrection they will neither marry nor be given in marriage" (Mt 22:30). Therefore, it is necessary that anyone who wishes to exercise oneself in the life of the kingdom here on earth, should hate not the persons themselves but those temporal relationships (*necessitudines*) by which this transitory life, that is traversed by being born and dying, is sustained. Whoever does not hate this life, does not yet love that life where there will be no situation of being born and of dying, that joins together earthly marriages. If I ask, Augustine says, a true Christian whether he wishes to have a spouse in the eternal kingdom, he will answer with some hesitation out of love, that he does not wish this. If I ask, on the contrary, whether he wishes to be there together with his wife, he will reply that he wishes this ardently. A good Christian loves in one and the same woman the creature of God, and hates in her the corruptible and mortal intercourse, that is, he loves in her that she is a human being, and hates that she is a spouse. This applies also to father and mother, and all the other ties of blood. "Therefore, let us love ... what can be taken with us to that kingdom where nobody says 'my father' but where all say 'our Father' to the one God, and nobody says 'my mother' but where all say 'our mother' to that Jerusalem, where nobody says 'my brother' but all say 'our brother' with regard to all people ... It is necessary that the disciple of Christ hate the transient things in those whom he desires to come with him to the things that will always remain". In his commentary, Augustine now includes also the last part of Lk 14:26 *non oderit insuper et animam suam*, and he interprets *anima* as referring to this life, because it is for this life that food is needed, and the Lord says: "Is not the soul more than food?" (Mt 6:25). In his *Retractationes*, Augustine corrects, as he did for *De vera religione*, his opinion that relations of kinship are due to original sin. Moreover, he specifies there the term *oderit* as meaning "in the case that such relationships become an obstacle to reach the kingdom of God".⁵¹ In

⁵¹ *De sermone domini in monte* I,15,40-42. CCL 35,45-47: "Sic invenitur bonus christianus diligere in una femina creaturam dei, quam reformari et renovari desiderat, odisse autem coniunctionem copulationemque corruptibilem atque mortalem, hoc est diligere in ea quod homo est, odisse quod uxor est ... Hoc et de patre et de matre et de ceteris vinculis sanguinis intellegendum est, ut in eis oderimus quod genus humanum nascendo et moriendo sortitum est, diligamus autem quod nobiscum potest ad illa regna perducere, ubi nemo dicit pater meus, sed omnes uni deo pater noster; nec mater mea, sed

Augustine's commentary on the Sermon on the mount, the role of the Holy Spirit and the unity between love of God and love of neighbour are stressed in a special way.⁵²

In *De fide et symbolo* (d. 393), the manichaeian interpretation that Jesus had not an earthly mother, a conclusion they drew from Jn 2:4 "Woman, what have I to do with you? My hour has not yet come" is rejected. Jesus said this to let us know that he had no mother so far as his divinity is concerned (*secundum deum*). But when he was crucified *secundum hominem*, he recognized his earthly mother by commending her most considerately to his beloved disciple (Jn 19:26-27). Otherwise, the manichaeians must admit also that the apostles had no fathers, because Jesus said "Call no one father upon earth, since you have only one Father, and He is in heaven" (Mt 23:9). The text continues with a reference to Mt 12:48 "Who is my mother? and who are my brothers?". This passage is explained in the sense that Jesus taught us that we ought not to recognize our parents if they hinder our ministry of the word of God.⁵³ The same

omnes illi Hierusalem mater nostra; nec frater meus, sed omnes de omnibus frater noster ... Pro hac enim vita posita est anima, de qua ibi dictum est: *Qui non oderit insuper et animam suam, non potest meus esse discipulus*". See *Retractationes* I, 19, 5. CCL 57, 57-58: "Ita sonat, quasi non essent futurae istae necessitudines, si nullo naturae humanae praecedente peccato nemo moreretur, quem sensum iam superius improbavi ... Ac per hoc aliter solvenda quaestio est ... sicut eam posterius saepe solvimus ... et oderimus in propinquis si impediunt a regno dei". The date of the text of *De serm. dom. in monte* I must be nearer to the year 392 than to 396 because of what is said in *Retract.* Indeed, Augustine's 'new' interpretation is found from 393 or 394 on.

⁵² Ib. I, 20, 64. ib. 74: "Itaque posteaquam eos docuit, quid esset diligere proximum tamquam se ipsum, infuso etiam spiritu sancto ...". Ib. II, 22, 75. ib. 173: "Videtur autem hoc praeceptum ad dilectionem proximi pertinere, non etiam ad dei, cum alio loco duo praecepta esse dicat in quibus tota lex pendet et omnes prophetae. Nam si dixisset: Omnia quaecumque vultis fieri vobis, haec et vos facite, hac una sententia utrumque illud praeceptum complexus esset; cito enim diceretur diligi se velle unumquemque et a deo et ab hominibus".

⁵³ *De fide et symbolo* 4, 9. CSEL 41, 12-13: "Detestandi autem etiam illi sunt, qui dominum nostrum Iesum Christum matrem Mariam in terris negant habuisse, cum illa dispensatio utrumque sexum, et masculinum et femininum honoraverit ... Nec nos ad negandam Christi matrem cogit, quod ab eo dictum est: *Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier? nondum venit hora mea*, sed admonet potius, ut intellegamus secundum deum non eum habuisse matrem, cuius maiestatis personam parabat ostendere aquam in vinum vertendo ... Tunc enim ut homo crucifixus cognovit hominem matrem et dilectissimo discipulo humanissime commendavit. Nec illud nos moveat, quod, cum ei nuntiaretur mater eius et fratres, respondit: *Quae mihi mater aut qui fratres* et cetera? Sed potius doceat ministerium nostrum, quo verbum dei fratribus ministramus, parentes cum impediunt, non eos debere cognosci. Si propterea quisque putaverit non eum habuisse matrem in terris, quia dixit: *quae mihi mater?* cogatur necesse est et apostolos negare habuisse patres in terris, quoniam praecepit eis dicens: *nolite vobis patrem dicere in terris; unus est enim pater*

combination of both scriptural texts within an anti-manichaean context occurs in Sermon on ps. 9,31 (d. about 394). Explaining that God becomes the Father of the little ones, Augustine refers to the example Jesus has given by saying "Who is my mother? and who are my brothers?" (Mt 12:48).⁵⁴

About 394 (because of the use of the term *gradus* applied to love of neighbour I think this work must be dated a bit earlier than 394), Augustine refutes the manichaean thesis that there is a contrast between the commandment "Honour your father and your mother" (Ex 20:12) and the New Testament text "I will go and bury my father first. But He answered: Leave the dead to bury their dead; you must come and proclaim the kingdom of God" (Lk 9:59-60). Augustine shows that we find in both Testaments a recommendation of loving our parents as well as despising them. Regarding the latter idea, he refers to Dt 33:9: "He who says to his father or mother: I do not know you, and does not recognize his children, he acknowledges your covenant". In spite of the fact that love of neighbour is a sure step (*gradus*) towards love of God, it is not loveless to consider parents less important than the proclamation of the kingdom of God, especially when the parents constitute a hindrance to it. We find a similar reasoning with regard to love of one's spouse. There are many texts in the New Testament which command this love. Nevertheless, it is said: "Everyone who has left his house, spouse, parents, brothers or children for the sake of the heavenly kingdom will be repaid seven times as much in this world, and also inherit eternal life in the coming world" (cf. Mt 19:29 and parallels). Here, too, there is no contradiction between the fact that the union of husband and wife comes from God, and that one leaves his wife for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁵

vester, qui in caelis est".

⁵⁴ *En. in ps. 9,31*. CCL 38,72: "Docet quippe Dominus pupillos fieri discipulos suos, quibus dicit: *Ne vobis dicatis patrem in terris*. Cuius rei exemplum prae-buit prior ipse dicendo: *Quae mihi mater, aut qui fratres?* Unde volunt quidam perniciosissimi haeretici asserere, non eum habuisse matrem; nec vident esse consequens si haec verba attendant, ut nec discipuli eius patrem habuerint". See also *Sermo 14,10*. CCL 41,191. (d. 418).

⁵⁵ *Contra Adimantum 6*. CSEL 25/1,126-127: "*Si vis venire ad vitam, serva mandata: in quibus etiam illud commemorat Honora patrem et matrem*. Quibus mandatis perfectis etiam ad dilectionem dei crescitur, in qua est tota perfectio. Nam dilectio proximi certus gradus est ad dilectionem dei ... De eo quod scriptum est in exodo: *honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam*. Huic etiam loco, ubi de honorandis parentibus deus praecepit, illum evangelii locum Manichaei dicunt esse contrarium. Ubi dominus cuidam dicenti: *ibo primum, ut sepeliam patrem meum* respondit: *sine mortuos, mortuos suos sepeliant; tu autem veni et adnuntia regnum dei* ... quia et parentes honorare debemus et eos tamen propter adnuntiationem regni dei nulla inpietate contemnimus ... Ex quo manifestum est et

Augustine's commentaries on the letter to the Romans and that to the Galatians (d. 394) form a crucial moment in the evolution of his thought. The relationship between love of God and love of neighbour reaches its definitive formulation remaining consistent till the end of his writings. Love of neighbour is quite plainly described as a gift of God so that we can love others with the love of the Holy Spirit. All our good works are performed by love, and that love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rm 5:5).⁵⁶ We find no trace any more of the ideal that *misericordia* should be free from emotions, as was the case in *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*, but he writes that no one can be merciful (*misericorditer operatur*) without the love given to us by the Holy Spirit.⁵⁷ And in the commentary on the letter to the Galatians Rm 5:5 is explained in the sense that the Holy Spirit is the source not only of justice and good works, but also of the love of neighbour. Augustine asks the question why Paul mentions sometimes only the precept of love of neighbour. The reason is that people can deceive themselves about the love of God, for this love is not so frequently put to the test. Self-deception is much more difficult in love of neighbour, since there we can be easily convinced that we fail in loving God, every time that we behave wrongly towards other people. Therefore, since both precepts are such that neither can be kept without the other, it is normally sufficient to mention just one of them when it is a matter of the works of justice.⁵⁸

honorem parentum in gradu suo esse servandum et eos tamen in divini amoris comparatione, praesertim si impedimento sunt, nulla dubitatione oportere contemni. Nam et in scripturis veteribus habes positum: *qui dicit patri aut matri: non novi vos, et filios suos non agnoscit, ipse cognovit testamentum tuum*. Ergo si in novo testamento commendatur parentum dilectio et in vetere commendatur parentum contemptus, ex utroque capite duo sibi testamenta consentiunt". Ib. 3. ib. 120: "Fides autem vera et ecclesiae catholicae disciplina utrumque verum et a domino dictum esse confirmat et nullo modo esse contrarium, quia et coniunctio mariti et uxoris a domino est et relictio uxoris propter regnum caelorum a domino est".

⁵⁶ *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistola ad Romanos* 52,60. CSEL 84,34: "Propterea ergo intelligendum est opera bona per dilectionem fieri, dilectionem autem esse in nobis per donum spiritus sancti". Ib. 2,2. ib. 3. Ib. 53,61. ib. 36. Cf. ib. 67,72. ib. 47: "Qui ergo diligit alterum, legem implevit (Rm 13:8)".

⁵⁷ Ib. 53,61. ib. 36: "Nemo ergo sibi audeat tribuere, quod misericorditer operatur, quia deus illi per spiritum sanctum dedit dilectionem, sine qua nemo potest esse misericors".

⁵⁸ *Expositio epist. ad Galatas* 44-45. CSEL 84,118-120: "Plenitudo enim legis caritas, et, quoniam fides impetrat spiritum sanctum, per quem caritas dei diffusa est in cordibus operantium iustitiam, nullo modo quisquam ante gratiam fidei de bonis operibus gloriatur ... Quaeri autem potest, cur apostolus et hic solam commemoravit proximi dilectionem, qua legem dixit impleri, et ad Romanos ... Cum ergo nonnisi in duobus praeceptis dilectionis dei et proximi perfecta sit caritas, cur apostolus et in hac et in illa epistola solam

III. THE TEXTS FROM 396 TILL 400

In his work *Contra Faustum* (d. 397-398), Augustine refutes again the contention that Jesus had no earthly mother, a conclusion drawn by the manichaeans from the text "Who is my mother? and who are my brothers?" (Mt 12:48). If they deny that Jesus had an earthly mother, they must also deny that Jesus' disciples had earthly fathers, for the Lord has also said: "Call no one father upon earth, since God is your only Father" (Mt 23:9). Jesus said these words in order to give us an example of despising the relationship based upon earthly family ties (*terreni generis necessitudinem*) for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Further in this work, Augustine emphasizes again the excellence of the relation, which is not of the temporary nature of earthly descent, but of divine grace that is everlasting. When Christ calls us into another life in which there is no death, he teaches us, instead of acknowledging, to deny the earthly relationship (*cognationem terrenam*). He refers to God as our only Father (Mt 23:9) and to the spiritual relationship based on the words "Whoever does the will of my Father, is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mt 12:48-50). This is as much as to say, I derive this relationship from God my Father, not from the Synagogue my mother. I call you away from this mortal life to eternal life.⁵⁹

proximi dilectionem commemorat, nisi quia de dilectione dei possunt mentiri homines, quia rariores temptationes eam probant, in dilectione autem proximi facilius convincuntur eam non habere, dum inique cum hominibus agunt? ... Cum ergo utrumque praeceptum ita sit, ut neutrum sine altero possit teneri, etiam unum horum commemorare plerumque sufficit, cum agitur de operibus iustitiae, sed opportunius illud, de quo quisque facilius convincitur ... Quomodo autem ista (sc. vitia) vitare possunt, nisi spiritu ambulent et concupiscentias carnis non perficiant? Primum enim et magnum munus est spiritus humilitas et mansuetudo". Cf. ib. 20. ib. 78-79. ib. 49. ib. 125-126. ib. 61. ib. 137. Later texts emphasizing that to mention only the commandment of love of neighbour is sufficient: *Sermo de dilectione dei et proximi* 13, ed. F. DOLBEAU, *Revue Bénédictine* 102(1992), p. 73. *De disciplina christiana* 5,5. CCL 46,212. In *Johannis epist. tr.* 8,4. PL 35,2037. *De Trinitate* VIII,8,12. CCL 50,287-288.

⁵⁹ *Contra Faustum* VII,2. CSEL 25/1,303-304: "Quodsi propterea putant eum non habuisse in terra matrem vel genus, quia dixit: *Quae mihi mater vel qui fratres?* superest ut etiam discipulos eius, quibus hoc exemplum in se ipso prae-buit, ut terreni generis necessitudinem propter regnum caelorum contemnerent, adfirmant non habuisse patres, quia dixit eis: *Ne vobis dicatis patrem in terra; unus enim est pater vester deus.* Quod ergo istos de patribus docuit, hoc ipse de matre et fratribus prior fecit". Ib. XXII,39. ib. 632-633: "Neque enim hanc gratiam de synagoga matre Christi secundum carnem, sed de deo patre percepimus. Hanc vero cognationem terrenam, quae ad mortem temporaliter generat vocans in aliam vitam, ubi nullus moritur, negare nos Christus docuit, non fateri

Letter 243 (d. 397⁶⁰) is written to Laetus who claimed to be a recruit of Christ, but was on the verge of leaving the camp because of his mother. Augustine starts with the warning: "If anyone comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:26-27), followed by the story of the man intending to build a tower, but seeing if he had enough to complete it, and the king marching to war and considering whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to another king (Lk 14:28-33).⁶¹ All these relationships are private possessions which can prevent from attaining the universal goods which remain forever. Your mother is not my mother, but as a sister in Christ she belongs to you and to me and to all the brethren. The opposition between the transitory private and the everlasting common good plays an important part in the argument. The private love of your mother is limited to your house; it must have the strength for creating the condition of speaking with her in a more intimate way and a greater openness for counsel, so that she gives up her private love in favour of the general love in the house of God. We have to become one soul toward God (cf. Acts 4:32), the single soul of Christ. Let parents not be angry because the Lord says to hate them, since He commands the same about our own life (*adhuc et animam suam*). Indeed, elsewhere we read: "Anyone who loves his life loses it" (Jn 12:25). This does not mean that we should kill ourselves, but that we ought to kill our worldly love for this life (*carnalem animae affectum*) in as far as it is to the detriment of the life to come. In like manner, we have to kill, with the spiritual sword of the word of God, our carnal affection for those who try to bind both themselves and their offspring with the fetters of this world. We should bring to life what makes us brothers in God and the Church as our eternal parents.⁶² Augustine refers to the heroic example of the mother of the

... Cuius rei prae-buit exemplum, quando et ipse dixit: *Quae mihi mater aut qui fratres?* ... Et ne quisquam in hoc vocabulo terrenam cognationem cogitaret, adiunxit: *Et quicumque fecerit voluntatem patris mei, ipse mihi frater, et mater, et soror est*, tamquam diceret: de deo patre hanc cognationem appello".

⁶⁰ See A. GABILLON, *Pour une datation de la lettre 243 d'Augustin à Laetus*, in: *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 40(1994) 127-142.

⁶¹ This story is recurring in *Epist.* 157,4,33-34. See text, note 95.

⁶² *Epist.* 243,3-5. CSEL 57,570-573: "Omnia enim haec propria eius sunt, quae plerumque implicant et impediunt ad obtinenda non ista propria temporaliter transitura sed in aeternum mansura communia... Nam ex quo soror est omnibus, quibus est pater deus et mater ecclesia, tam te non impedit quam neque me neque omnes fratres nostros, qui eam non privata sicut tu in domo vestra sed publica in domo dei caritate diligimus. Quod ergo tu illi etiam carnali necessitudine adnecteris, ad sortem valere debet familiarius conloquendi et apertiora ianua consulendi, ut hoc ipsum, quo te privatim diligit, interficiatur in ea ...

Maccabean martyrs. To be sure, we should pay our filial duty, we should be grateful to our parents and repay earthly favors by spiritual ones, but let these things keep their position in that place where higher duties do not call. At the same time, Augustine implores Laetus not to let him be perverted by his possessive mother, for a man has to guard against Eve in every woman. Augustine illustrates his view by referring to Mt 12:47-50 "Who is my mother? and who are my brothers?". This does not mean that He had no earthly mother, as some think. But Jesus gave priority to the spiritual relationship with those who do the will of his Father. He included graciously his mother Mary in this number, but rejected the name of mother which they had announced to Him as his private and own possession, because it was an earthly name in comparison to heavenly kinship. Thus Jesus gave his disciples an example of despising such relationships (*necessitudines*).⁶³

From the same year dates Augustine's sermon *De honorandis vel contemnendis parentibus*, preached on the feast of a martyr. It is an explanation of the text "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rm 8:35). If the sword of the executioner cannot separate us from that love, perhaps the *carnalis adfectus* can do so. Therefore, we should take to heart the words of the Lord: "If anyone comes to me without hating his father, mother, spouse, children and brother, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:26). A father, a mother, a spouse, children, and brothers are all alluring, agreeable and delightful. But are they more delightful than God or Christ? No. Nevertheless, we must ask the question how to reconcile Lk 14:26 with the command "Love your father and your mother, which is the first commandment with a promise attached in the words: that it may be well with you and that you may live long in the land" (Eph 6:2-3)". The same must be asked with regard to Mt 19:6 about the dismissal of a spouse:

Sicut ... hoc praeceptum quo perdere iubemur animam nostram, non ad id valet ut se quisque interimat ... et tamen valet ut interimat in se carnalem animae affectum ... ita de parentibus rectissime dicitur ut, qui eos amat, perdat eos non more parricidarum interficiens, sed spiritali gladio verbi dei carnalem affectum eorum, quo et seipsos et eos quos genuerunt implicamentis huius saeculi obligare conantur, pie fidenter percutiens et occidens, illud in eis vivere faciat, quo fratres sunt, quo cum filiis suis temporalibus, parentes aeternos deum ecclesiamque cognoscunt". Concerning the expression "apertiore ianua consulendi" see *De vera religione* 47,91, text note 43, and *De civitate dei* XIX,14 "oportuniorem facilioremque aditum", see text note 110.

⁶³ Ib. 9. 576: "Ita optimus magister atque divinus, et maternum nomen, quod ei quasi privatum propriumque nuntiaverant, quia terrenum erat, in comparatione caelestis propinquitatis abiecit; et eandem caelestem propinquitatem in discipulis commendans, quo sibi rursum consortio generis cum caeteris sanctis virgo illa cohaereret, ostendit". Regarding the mother of the Maccabean martyrs, see also *Sermo* 300,7,7. PL 38,1380. (d. ?).

"What God has united, human being must not divide". Wife and husband consider themselves rightly as members of one body, and the rights of the wife with respect to her husband surpass those of the parents. She has not the right, however, to separate him from Christ. In order to show against the manichaeans that the one God is the giver of both Testaments and of the two commandments (of loving and despising), Augustine refers again to Dt 33:9 saying that children must reject their parents, and parents their children for the sake of the covenant. At the end of this sermon, Augustine emphasizes the last part of Lk 14:26 *oderis insuper animam tuam*; if parents, spouse, children, or brothers may be filled with indignation, they should not forget that even the person has to despise his or her own life and soul (*anima*) in such cases.⁶⁴

In another sermon of the same year, we read that we have to begin with love of neighbour in order to attain God. Human beings favour the presence of each other; they like mutual love. But this is also found among irrational animals such as birds, beasts of burden, or tigers. They care for their young. Only the human being, however, is made in the image of God. Therefore, Augustine declares: "I do not say just like that: Love your child, your spouse, your close friend, your acquaintance as yourself (cf. Mt 22:40). You answer perhaps: I love them. I ask first: Do you love yourself?", and by true self-love Augustine understands a love that includes love of God, our supreme good. It does not matter what kind of love we choose: if we choose love of neighbour, it will be only true love if we love God; if we choose love of God, it will be only true love of God if the neighbour is implied.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ *Sermo de honorandis vel contemnendis parentibus*, ed. F. DOLBEAU, *Revue Bénédictine* 102(1992) 288-297. "Nam contra blandimenta deceptionis de affectu carnali ait: *Si quis venit ad me et non odit patrem et matrem, uxorem, filios et cetera ... Cupiditatis ianuam pulsant pater, mater, uxor, filii, fratres: omnia blanda sunt, suavia sunt, dulcia sunt. Sed numquid suaviora quam deus? numquid dulciora quam Christus?*" (ib. 2-3, p. 289). "Non te (sc. uxorem) separaverunt pater et mater viri tui a marito tuo: non separabis virum tuum a deo tuo ... Timet vir in articulo martyrii ne sit illi uxor Eva, timet et uxor in articulo martyrii ne sit illi maritus serpens" (ib. 9 and 13, p. 294 and 296).

⁶⁵ *Sermo de dilectione dei et proximi*, ed. F. DOLBEAU, *Revue Bénédictine* 102(1992) 66-74. Ib. 7, p. 69-70: "Haec est regula: *Diliges proximum tuum tamquam teipsum*. Iam non dico: Filium, coniugem, vicinum amicum, vicinum notum diliges tamquam teipsum. Forte respondes: 'Diligo'. Prius quaero an diligas teipsum ... Vis audire quid dicit qui te fecit? Vide tantum quomodo bene valde te diligis: utrum iniquitatem non diligas. *Qui enim diligit iniquitatem, odit animam suam* (Ps. 10:6)". The date of 397 given to this sermon by Dolbeau can perhaps be confirmed by what I have considered as a kind of turning point in Augustine's view on love of neighbour, namely his commentaries on the Pauline letters from 394. In these commentaries, we find some ideas which return in *Sermo Dolbeau: verbum consummans et brevians* (Rm 9:28) in *Exp. q. prop. ex ep. ad Rom.* 59,67

Emphasizing that love is "the fulfilling and summarizing word of God" (Is 10:23), Augustine states that we should not understand "neighbour" to refer in the first place to a brother or sister, to a blood relation, or relation by marriage, for each person is next of kin to every other person. Usually we call *proximi* father and son, fathers-in-law and sons-in-law. But not only children of the same parents are next of kin, for in Adam and Eve we are all brothers and sisters. By the very fact that we are human beings, we are one another's brothers and sisters. But this is still much more true by the fact that we are Christians, born from our one Father-God and one mother-church.⁶⁶

Shortly before 399, the theme of the spiritual sword recurs in a sermon explicitly referring to the text: "I did not come to bring peace to the earth, but a sword" (Mt 10:34). Take a look at that sword which separates children from parents; perhaps you wish to serve God, but your father forbids it.⁶⁷ And about 400 Augustine repeats his interpretation of Jn 2:4 "Woman, what have I to do with you?". This text does not mean a rejection of Jesus' mother *de qua suscepit carnem*, but is a reference to his divinity.⁶⁸

IV. TEXTS FROM 400 TILL 415

An important text, in which Augustine underlines the role of belief and trust in human relationships, belongs to this period, certainly after 399, though its exact date is unknown. If we do not believe in love, which is in itself invisible, mutual affection becomes impossible. The consequence will be a great disorder and fearful confusion within the state of human affairs. No friendship, no bonds of marriage, of kindreds or relations will be pre-

(CSEL 84,42); *non adulterabis* etc. (Rm 13:9) in *Exp. ep. ad Gal.* 45 (ib. 119); *etiam unum horum commemorare plerumque sufficit* (ib. 119); *qui enim non diligit fratrem suum quem videt* (1 Jn 4:20) (ib. 119-120).

⁶⁶ *De disciplina christiana* 3,3. CCL 46,210. (possibly dating from 398): "Non enim primo sic debes intellegere proximum, vel fratrem, vel cognatum, vel affinem. Proximus est omni homini omnis homo. Proximi sibi dicuntur pater et filius, socer et gener. Nihil tam proximum, quam homo et homo. Sed si putamus non esse proximos, nisi qui de eisdem parentibus nascuntur, Adam et Eva attendamus, et omnes fratres sumus. Et quidem fratres secundum quod homines sumus, quanto magis secundum quod christiani sumus? Ad id quod homo es, unus pater fuit Adam, una mater Eva; ad id quod christianus es, unus pater est deus, una mater ecclesia".

⁶⁷ *Sermo Denis* 18,4. MA I,94: "Audistis evangelium: Non veni pacem mittere in terram, sed gladium. Dixit se separaturum filios a parentibus. Ergo attende machaeram. Forte vis deo servire, et pater prohibet?".

⁶⁸ *De consensu evangelistarum* IV,10,11. CSEL 43,407.

served, for all are based on a friendly unanimity (*amica consensio*). If the love of parents for their children and of children for their parents becomes uncertain and the will suspected while due benevolence is not rendered, then this has also consequences for the relationships (*necessitudines*) between brothers, sisters, sons-in-law, fathers-in-law, and those who are joined together by any kindred or affinity.⁶⁹

About 401, Augustine declares that the passage "Who is my mother? and who are my brothers?" (Mt 12:46) teaches us that we ought to prefer our spiritual descent to carnal relations. Human persons are not blessed because they are united with just and holy people by nearness of flesh, but by obeying and following their teaching and conduct. Therefore, Mary is more blessed in receiving the faith of Christ than in conceiving his flesh: "Happy the womb that bore you and the breasts you sucked. But he replied: Still happier those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk 11:27-28). What profit was there to his brothers after the flesh who did not believe in him? Christ has holy men and women as brothers and sisters because they are coheirs in the heavenly inheritance. Every pious soul doing the will of his Father is very fertile through love because of those it gives birth, until Christ himself is formed in them. All faithful dedicated to God are mothers of Christ in a spiritual sense.⁷⁰

In two sermons on the psalms (d. 399? or 403), we find the first longer commentaries on Mt 10:34-35: "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to earth: it is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword. For

⁶⁹ *De fide rerum invisibilium* 2,4. CCL 46,4-5: "Si auferatur haec fides de rebus humanis, quis non attendat, quanta earum perturbatio et quam horrenda confusio subsequatur? ... Porro amicitia pereunte neque conubiorum neque cognationum et affinitatum vincula in animo servabuntur; quia et in his utique amica consensio est ... Quid iam de ceteris necessitudinibus dicam, fratrum, sororum, generorum atque socerorum et qualibet consanguinitate et affinitate iunctorum, si caritas incerta voluntasque suspecta est et filiis parentum et parentibus filiorum, dum benevolentia non redditur debita, quia nec deberi putatur, quando in alio quae non videtur esse non creditur?"

⁷⁰ *De sancta virginitate* 3,3. CSEL 41,237: "Quid aliud nos docens nisi carnali cognitioni genus nostrum spiritale praeponere nec inde beatos esse homines, si iustus et sanctis carnis propinquitatem iunguntur, sed si eorum doctrinae ac moribus oboediendo atque imitando cohaerescunt? Beatior ergo Maria percipiendo fidem Christi quam concipiendo carnem Christi ... Denique fratribus eius, id est secundum carnem cognatis, qui non in eum crediderunt, quid profuit illa cognatio?". Ib. 5,5. ib. 239: "Fratres et sorores habet sanctos viros et sanctas feminas, quoniam sunt illi in caelesti hereditate coheredes ... Item mater eius est omnis anima pia faciens voluntatem patris eius fecundissima caritate in his quos parurit, donec in eis ipse formetur". Concerning the virgins, cf. *Sermo* 92,2,2. PL 38,1012. (d. ?): "Verumtamen si verbi ejus memineritis sicut meminisse debetis, estis etiam vos matres ejus, quia voluntatem facitis Patris ejus. Ipse enim dixit: *Quicumque facit voluntatem Patris mei, ipse mihi frater et soror et mater est*".

I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law (cf. Mt 7:6)". The sword is the word of God. It does not only separate us from bad habit, but also it separates a faithful from his father or mother who do not believe in Christ; or if someone is born from Christian parents, it separates him or her certainly from the ancestry. The same is true when a son or daughter want to serve God against the will of their parents. This is not an injury done to the parents; only God is preferred to them. The spiritual sword is stronger than the bond of the corporeal nature. Thus Jesus left his mother, the Synagogue, and a sign of this is the text "Who is my mother? or who are my brothers?" (Mt 12:48).⁷¹ About the year 412, Augustine treats the same topic in three other places. In the first, he says about the apostle Paul that he was sent out of spiritual affection to carnal people. The sword separates from a carnal affection, whereas the fire takes it completely away. This sword is the word of God, and this fire is the Spirit of God.⁷² He speaks further of a beneficent sword with a double acuteness, that of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament. It separates believers from unbelievers, and breaks off all other connections of this sort. This sword is for the members of Christ a healing sword. In the third text, it is called a double-edged sword (Hebr 4:12) for it refers to temporal as well as to eternal things, to the promises of this life and to those of the life to come, to temporal consolations and to enjoyment of eternal things. This sword separates the person, who is hit by it, from the world. It divides the saints and the wicked; it removes from you what hinders you. The word of God divides children from their parents; a son or daughter wants to serve God, but the parents disagree with them. Let yourself not be kept back from Him who wishes to keep you back. Let a father, mother, sister, spouse, or a friend not keep you back, and the two-edged sword will be

⁷¹ *En. in ps.* 96,7. CCL 39,1359: "Gladium enim adtulit, et separavit unumquemque fidelium aut a patre suo qui in Christum non crediderat, aut a matre similiter infideli; aut certe, si de parentibus christianis natus est, saltem a progenie sua priore". *En. in ps.* 44,11-12. CCL 38,502: "Non sibi putet pater factam iniuriam; Deus solus illi praeferetur; et tamen litigat cum filio volente servire Deo. Sed fortior est ille gladius spiritualis separans, quam copulans natura carnalis. Fit hoc et de filia adversus matrem ... Quomodo dimisit et matrem? Gentem Iudaeorum synagogam illam haerentem veteribus sacramentis. Ad ipsam figuram pertinet quod ait *Quae est mihi mater, aut qui fratres?*".

⁷² *Enarr. I in ps.* 103,16. CCL 40,1488-1489: "De spiritali quadam affectione missus est ad carnales ... Gladius dividit affectum carnalem, ignis absumit. Totum in verbo Dei intellege, totum in spiritu Dei cognosce".

useful.⁷³ In 412, another scriptural text is used to deepen the argument, namely, "If my father and mother deserted me, the Lord, however, has taken me up" (Ps 26/27:10). We must make ourselves like little children just as parents take up their babies. For children who are not accepted by their parents, are abandoned, but those who are accepted, are nourished. Nevertheless, there remains a difference between God and an earthly mother, for God accepts us to all eternity.⁷⁴ And a few years later, Augustine says that the children separated from their parents, or the wives separated from their husbands by the sword of God's word may not be considered desolated, for they find consolation in the words of Psalm 26/27:10.⁷⁵

In the first sermons on the Gospel of John (d. 406-407), Augustine comments on the wedding at Cana. Jesus did not come to this wedding in order to condemn marriage, neither to despise mothers. Marriages are celebrated and women get married in order to have children who are ordered by God to honour their parents. Therefore, we have to ask in which sense Jesus said: "Woman, what have I to do with you? My hour has not come yet" (Jn 2:4). First, Augustine maintains against the manichaeans that Jesus had a real mother on earth. He continues by giving his explanation of these strange words. As if not recognizing the human womb, Jesus indicated that He had to perform divine works, which are not

⁷³ *En. in ps.* 143,17. CCL 40,2084-2085: "Procul dubio est gladius benignus. Quis est gladius benignus? De quo Dominus dicit: *Non veni pacem mittere in terram, sed gladium*. Separaturus enim erat fideles ab infidelibus, filios a parentibus, et ceteras necessitudines diremturus, gladio putredinem abscondente, membra autem Christi sanante". *En. in ps.* 149,12. CCL 40,2185-2186: "Sermo ergo Dei, gladius bis acutus. Unde bis acutus? Dicit de temporalibus, dicit de aeternis. In utroque probat quod dicit, et eum quem ferit, separat a mundo. Nonne ipse est gladius, de quo Dominus dicit: *Non veni pacem mittere in terram, sed gladium?* ... Disiungit sanctos, disiungit impios, separat a te quod te impedit ... Filius vult servire Deo, pater non vult; venit gladius, venit sermo Dei: dividit filium a patre. Filia vult, mater non vult: gladio dividuntur ab invicem ... Habes spem futurarum rerum, habes consolationem praesentium; noli retrahi ab eo qui vult retrahere: pater, mater, soror, uxor sit, amicus sit, non te retrahat; et utilis tibi erit gladius bis acutus".

⁷⁴ *En. in ps.* 45,11. CCL 38,525: "Fac te infantem parvulum omnino, quales a parentibus suscipiuntur. Qui enim non suscipiuntur, exponuntur; qui suscipiuntur, nutriuntur. Putasne sic te suscepit Deus, quomodo infantem te suscepit mater tua? Non sic, sed in aeternum". Cf. the same idea with the word *pupillus*: *Sermo* 14,10. CCL 41,191. (d. 418).

⁷⁵ *En. in ps.* 67,6. CCL 39,871: "Desolatos enim putant, a quibus plerumque gladio verbi Dei, et parentes a filiis, et mariti ab uxoribus separantur ... habent eius consolationem qui ei dicunt: *Quoniam pater meus et mater mea dereliquerunt me; Dominus autem assumpsit me*". See also the interpretation of Ps 26/27:10 in: *Sermo* 216,8,8. PL 38,1081. (d. 391 or later). *En. 2 in ps.* 26, 18. CCL 38,164-165. (d. 411-412). *S. Wilmart* 13,6. MA I,715. (d. about 410-412). *S. Mai* 130,3. MA I,379. (d. ?). *Sermo* 14,10. CCL 41,191 (d. 418) together with the text *Ne vobis dicatis patrem in terra* (Mt 23:9).

based on what Mary has brought forth, but on his divinity. He was at the same time the Lord of Mary and the son of Mary. The hour at which He recognizes her as his earthly mother, has still to come when He would hang on the cross.⁷⁶ The text "Who is my mother? and who are my brothers?" is interpreted in two phases. If we do not recognize Christ as our brother and teacher, it is meaningless to call other people our brothers. Moreover, the Lord praised in Mary that she did the will of the Father, not that her body brought forth the body of Christ, as we read in Lk 11:27-28 "Happier are those who hear the word of God and keep it".⁷⁷

About 412, Augustine asks the question how the church formed by converted gentiles can be called the mother of Christ. He replies that this is only possible on account of Mt 12:46-50.⁷⁸ According to sermon on Ps. 127 (d. 412 or 407), the church is presented as spouse and sons, as brothers, sisters, and mother of Christ at the same time. His earthly mother and brothers standing outside are an image of the Synagogue. But by performing the will of the Father they are no longer outsiders, but they belong to Christ as appears from his answer to the question "Who is my mother? and who are my brothers?". It is a mistake to draw from this text the conclusion that Jesus had no mother, just as it is a mistake to say that the apostles had no father on account of the text "Call no one father upon earth". The Lord desired that we set God above blood relationships. Fathers should not be angry for that; on the contrary, they should be glad that they are honoured so greatly. We are Christ's brothers because of the male sex in the church; Christ's sisters because of the women among the members of Christ; Christ's mothers because of the presence of Christ in

⁷⁶ *In Joh. evangelium* tr. 8,5-9. CCL 36,84-88: "Quid est hoc? ideone venit ad nuptias, ut doceret matres contemni? ... Ille ergo venerat ad nuptias ut exhonoreret matrem, cum propter filios habendos, quibus reddere honorem parentibus imperat Deus, ipsae nuptiae celebrentur, et ducantur uxores? ... Miraculum ergo exigebat mater; at ille tamquam non agnoscit viscera humana, operaturus facta divina, tamquam dicens: Quod de me facit miraculum, non tu genuisti, divinitatem meam non tu genuisti; sed quia genuisti infirmitatem meam, tunc te cognoscam, cum ipsa infirmitas pendeat in cruce ... Commendat homo homini hominem". See T.J. VAN BAVEL, o.c., p. 60.

⁷⁷ *In Joh. evang. tr.* 10,3. CCL 36,101: "... quia et illi cognati fratres non essent, si discipuli non essent, et sine causa fratres, si magistrum non agnoscerent fratrem ... Hoc in ea magnificavit Dominus, quia fecit voluntatem Patris, non quia caro genuit carnem".

⁷⁸ *Sermo* 10,2. CCL 41,154: "Et de gentili quidem fornicatione veniens ecclesia manifestum est quod non occiderit Christum. Sed quomodo mater Christi etiam ipsa sit, cogitandum est. Attende evangelium, et audi dominum dicentem: *Qui fecerit voluntatem patris mei, hic mater mea et frater et soror est*".

the Christians, to whom the church gives birth every day.⁷⁹

When the donatists asked the question: Whom do you call your father?, the catholics answered that there is no contradiction between the texts "Call no one father upon earth; only God is your Father" (Mt 23:9) and "You may have many tutors in Christ, but you have not many fathers. For it was I who begot you in Christ Jesus through the preaching of the gospel" (1 Cor 4:15). Augustine remarks that one must make a distinction between what is to be attributed to the grace of God, and what is said as a mark of honour.⁸⁰ Calling God our only Father does not mean that the name father given to human beings should be erased from our usual way of speaking, but Mt 23:9 is said lest the grace of God through which we are regenerated unto eternal life, should be ascribed to the nature, power, or even sanctity of a human being. With this restriction, we may call the patriarchs of the Old Testament fathers for the sake of human honour because of their age and their concern for piety towards God. In the same sense, Paul calls himself father.⁸¹ Paul is at the same time father and mother, not by himself but because of the gospel he preached.⁸²

We see in these years that Augustine highlights more and more the value of human relationships as such, albeit always with the same reservation. The human race is created from one single human being in view of

⁷⁹ *Enarr. in ps.* 127,12. CCL 40,1876-1877: "Ergo ipsa coniux, et ipsi filii. Mirum dico, fratres mei. In verbis Domini invenimus ecclesiam et fratres ipsius esse, et sorores ipsius esse, et matrem ipsius esse ... Quia foris stabant, typum gerebant. Quis typus matris? Synagoga. Quis typus fratrum carnalium? Iudaei foris stantes ... Hoc enim respondit Dominus et ait: *Quae mihi mater, aut qui fratres?* ... Vult enim Dominus ut consanguinitatibus terrenis praeponamus Deum. Defer patri, quia pater est; defer Deo, quia Deus est ... Puta *frater*, propter sexum virilem quem habet ecclesia, *soror*, propter feminas quas hic in membris habet Christus; *mater* quomodo, nisi quia ipse Christus est in christianis, quos christianos per baptismum quotidie parit ecclesia?"

⁸⁰ *Breviculus collationis cum Donatistis* III,7,8. CCL 149/A,277. (d. 411-412): "Neque enim posset contrarium Christo apostolus loqui ut, cum ille diceret: *Ne vobis dicatis patrem in terra; unus enim pater vester Deus*, contra apostolus tamquam resistens verbis Christi patrem se diceret eorum quibus annuntiaverat evangelium, nisi esset utique distinguendum quid divinae gratiae, quid humanae honorificentiae causa diceretur".

⁸¹ *Enarr. in ps.* 77,11. CCL 39,1077. (d. 414-416): "*Ne vobis dicatis patrem in terra; unus est enim Pater vester Deus*. Quod non ideo dictum est, ut hoc vocabulum honoris humani de loquendi consuetudine tolleretur; sed ne gratia Dei qua in aeternam vitam regeneramur, naturae, vel potestati, vel etiam sanctitati cuiusquam hominis tribueretur".

⁸² *Enarr. I in ps.* 101,8. CCL 40,1431. (d. 395): "Paulus et pater est et mater est; non per seipsum, sed per evangelium: pater ubi dicit: *Etsi habeatis multos paedagogos in Christo, sed non multos patres; in Christo enim Iesu per evangelium ego vos genui*". Cf. *Contra litteras Petiliani* III,55,67. CSEL 52,221-222. (d. 398-401).

the closer relationship of kindred and the bond of unity.⁸³ Some of God's gifts are earthly, others heavenly. But let us not forget that the natural earthly gifts are also due to the mercy of God. That we have being, are distinguished from animals, are rational beings able to understand God; further, that we enjoy this light, this air, rain, fruits, diversity of seasons, earthly comforts, health of the body, as well as the affection of friends and the well-being of our family, all those things are good and God's gifts. But also wicked people enjoy these earthly goods, and, therefore, we must pay attention to the eternal and heavenly mercy of God who promises a good that is not temporal.⁸⁴ "Honour your father and your mother" is the first commandment of the seven relating to the love of neighbour. Augustine notices nicely that the reason for this lies in the fact that, when a human being opens for the first time his or her eyes, the child sees its parents, and with their friendship this life begins. Whoever fails to honour his or her parents, how will this person be able to spare others?⁸⁵ Advocating a selfless and sincere love of children for their parents and of parents for their children, the bishop describes a very concrete situation, and speaks of *amabilis pietas*. Children of poor parents love their parents often in a more sincere way than children of rich parents, because the motive of children of poor parents is love, and not a material reward. Poor children expect nothing from their father, for he has nothing that he can leave them. On

⁸³ *De Genesi ad litt.* IX,9. CSEL 28/1,277-278. (d. 415): "Hic vero cum inplenda esset hominibus terra et eam propter cognationis artiolem necessitudinem et unitatis vinculum maxime commendandum ex uno oporteret impleri ...". *De bono coniugali* 1,1. 3,3. CSEL 41,187. (d. 401): "Prima itaque naturalis humanae societatis copula vir et uxor est ... Bonum ergo coniugii ... quod mihi non videtur propter solam filiorum procreationem, sed propter ipsam etiam naturalem in diverso sexu societatem". *De civitate dei* XII,22. 28. CCL 48, 380. 384. (d. 417-418): "Unum ac singulum creavit, non utique solum sine humana societate deserendum, sed ut eo modo vehementius ei commendaretur ipsius societatis unitas vinculumque concordiae, si non tantum inter se naturae similitudine, verum etiam cognationis affectu homines necterentur ... factus est unus, sed non relictus est solus".

⁸⁴ *Enarr. in ps.* 35,7-8. CCL 38,326-327. (d. 412-413): "Est enim misericordia Domini et in terra ... Munera Dei partim temporalia sunt atque terrena, partim aeterna et caelestia ... Quis non habet istam misericordiam Dei, primo ut sit, ut discernatur a pecoribus, ut rationale sit animal, qui possit Deum intellegere, deinde frui ista luce, isto aere, pluvia, fructibus, diversitate temporum, solatiis terrenis, salute corporis, affectu amicorum, salute domus suae? ... Vident ista omnia bona terrena, habere atque abundare impios et iniquos ... Misericordia quaedam quam donas sanctis tuis, caelestis est, non terrena; aeterna est, temporalis non est".

⁸⁵ *Sermo* 9,7. CCL 41,120-121. (d. ?): "Nam ipse numerus septenarius ... incipit ab honore parentum ... Ad parentes enim suos homo aperit oculos, et haec vita ab eorum amicitia sumit exordium. Quisquis autem suis parentibus non defert honorem, quibus parcere poterit?"

the other hand, rich parents sometimes are suspicious of their children when they think that it is only for their money that their children are considerate to them.⁸⁶

In sermon 349 (d. about 412), Augustine makes a distinction between a human and a divine kind of love. Within human love, he makes another distinction between a lawful and an unlawful love. It is right to love your wives, to love your children, to love your friends, to love your fellow citizens with human love. All these names imply a bond of relationship (*necessitudinis vinculum*) and, in a special way, the glue of love. But also unbelievers love their wives, children, brothers, neighbours, relations, friends, and so on. This love is human love. Without this love of children and wives, there would be the loss of the human feeling of love, and one would end in cruelty, and be no longer worthy to be counted among human beings. Elsewhere, not acknowledging the own parents is even called "the behaviour of dogs, because the puppies are born blind".⁸⁷ A person who loves his children is not particularly praiseworthy, but who does not love them is to be condemned. However, also wild beasts like adders, tigers, or lions love their young. A human being who does not love his or her children is worse than a lion. These loves are human, but lawful.⁸⁸ It is allowed to love wives and children albeit in a worldly way. But there is one restriction: to love in the highest sense of the word is to love with reference to Christ and to God. We should love Christ in them, and hate in them the fact that they do not want to possess Christ. "Still, when you love them in a human way, love Christ more. I am not saying: you should not love your wife, but love Christ more. I am not saying: you should not love your father, I am not saying you should not love your children, but love Christ more. Do not think that these are just my words; listen to Christ saying: *Whoever loves father or mother more than me, is*

⁸⁶ *Sermo* 45,2. CCL 41,517. (d. 408-411?).

⁸⁷ *Sermo* 8,7. CCL 41,85-86. (d. 411): "Quartum praeceptum est *Honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam* ... Caninum est parentes non agnoscere; nihil tam caninum, quam cum illi qui genuerunt non agnoscuntur".

⁸⁸ *Sermo* 349,2,2. PL 39,1530: "Liceat vobis humana charitate diligere conjuges, diligere filios, diligere amicos vestros, diligere cives vestros. Omnia enim ista nomina habent necessitudinis vinculum, et gluten quodam modo charitatis. Sed videtis istam charitatem esse posse et impiorum, id est, Paganorum, Judaeorum, haeticorum. Quis enim eorum non amat uxorem, filios, fratres, vicinos, affines, amicos, etc.? Haec ergo humana est. Si ergo tali quisque crudelitate effertur, ut perdat etiam humanum dilectionis affectum, et non amet filios suos, et non amet conjugem suam; nec inter homines numerandus est. Non enim laudandus est qui amat filios suos; sed damnandus est qui non amat filios ... Amant filios et ferae ... Ergo qui non amat filios suos etiam leone peior est. Humana sunt ista, et licita sunt".

not worthy of me" (Mt 10:37)".⁸⁹

In sermon 90 (d. 412-416), Augustine tells how sparrows and swallows love their mates, how they sit on the eggs (*foveant*), feed the chicks together, out of a gratuitous and natural goodness, without a thought of any reward. The male shows a parental affection and does not expect any reward. Augustine applies this example to his audience by saying: "I know, I am sure, you love your children in the same way ... But extend this love, let it grow, because loving children, wives and husbands is not yet that wedding garment. Have faith in God. First love God. Extend yourselves toward God, and carry along toward God whom you can". This applies not only to children, wife and slaves, but also to strangers and enemies. The wedding garment is for Augustine: "*Love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith*" (1 Tm 1:5).⁹⁰

The text of Mt 10:37 is again the subject of a sermon edited by R. Etaix (d. 414-418?⁹¹). Father or mother are making a just demand when they say "Love me", for a father begot and reared us, and a mother bore and nourished us. But we should answer that we love them in Christ, and not instead of Christ. When they declare not to want Christ, we have to

⁸⁹ Ib. 7,7. ib. 1532: "Amate filios vestros, amate conjuges vestras, etsi saeculariter. Nam secundum Christum amare debetis, ut secundum Deum illis consulatis, et non in eis nisi Christum diligatis, et oderitis in vestris si Christum habere noluerint. Ipsa enim est charitas illa divina. Nam quid eis proderit transitoria et mortalis charitas vestra? Tamen quando et humanitus diligitis, plus Christum amate. Non dico ut non diligas uxorem: sed plus diligite Christum. Non dico ut non diligas patrem, non dico ut non diligas filios; sed plus dilige Christum. Audi illum dicentem, ne mea putes ista verba: *Qui amat patrem aut matrem plus quam me, non est me dignus*".

⁹⁰ *Sermo* 90,10. PL 38,566: "Scitis istos passeres et hirundines quemadmodum diligant conjuges, simul ova foveant, simul pullos nutrant, grata quadam et naturali bonitate, nulla cogitata mercede ... affectum parentis exhibet, retributionem non requirit. Et nos, novi, scio, sic amatis filios vestros ... Sed extendite dilectionem, crescat ista dilectio: amare autem filios et conjuges, nondum vestis illa nuptialis est. Habete fidem ad Deum. Prius diligite Deum. Extendite ad Deum; et quod poteritis, rapite ad Deum".

⁹¹ This is the date proposed by R. Etaix. O. O'DONOVAN, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, p. 174, note 53, proposes the date 397-398, because of the use "of the verb 'uti' expressing God's love for man. This sermon now affords the only parallel to *De doctr. Christ.* I on this point, and should accordingly be dated to 397 or 398". But the question is whether the text refers to God's love for the human being or to the way human beings have to use material goods such as gold. I prefer the following translation (supposing that the text is not corrupt): "What does gold say to me? 'Love me'. But what does God say to me? 'I shall use you (that is, gold), and so use you that you do not hold me fast and (but) detach (me) from you'" (*Quid mihi dicit aurum? Ama me. Sed Deus mihi quid? Utar te, et sic utar te ut non teneas me et separe a te. Quidquid aliud mihi dicit: Ama me, creatura est*). It seems to me that the large number of biblical quotations is also an indication of a later date than 397.

want Christ more than them. In support of his view, Augustine refers to Mt 23:9 "Call no one father upon earth, since God is your only Father" combined with Mt 6:9 "Our Father who is in heaven". This seemed harsh if Jesus had imposed a rule without giving himself an example. The example can be found in Mt 12:48-50 where Jesus affirms that whoever does the will of his Father, is his brother and sister and mother. If He would have broken off his proclaiming of the message, and gone to his mother, He would have strengthened in his heart a human affection instead of an affection for God. Thus He rejected the synagogue He was born from, and found those to whom He gave a new birth. His brothers and sisters are those who love with Him the paternal inheritance; his mother is she who conceives in her heart what Mary conceived in her womb. Human affection in corporeal relationships between parents, brothers, and sisters is limited. Nobody can be brother and mother of the same person. Spiritual love, on the contrary, is not so limited. Here Augustine refers to the church which is the spouse, the bride, and the mother of Christ (with quotations from Gn 2:24. Eph 5:31-32. 1 Cor 12:27). Parents should not be angry; they are respected highly, for only God is preferred to them. We do not neglect the divine commandment "Honour your father and your mother" (Ex 20:12). We most certainly love them, but not more than Him.⁹² Here Augustine quotes for the first time, within this context at

⁹² *Sermo Etaix 1,5-7. Revue Bénédictine 86(1976),43-45: "Pater dicat: Ama me. Mater dicat: Ama me ... Nonne iustum est quod exigunt? ... Respondeamus patri et matri iuste dicentibus: Ama nos; respondeamus: Amo vos in Christo, non pro Christo amo ... Sed nos - inquit - nolumus Christum. Sed ego plus quam vos volo Christum ... Nolite, inquit, vobis patrem dicere in terra, unus est enim Pater vester Deus. Durum videbatur si imponeret praeceptum et non praeberet exemplum. Aiente quaedam de regno caelorum cum discipulis suis, mater stabat foris, stare foris nuntiata est ... Ille itaque si praetermissis quae aiebat ad illam procederet, non divinum in corde suo, sed humanum aedificaret affectum ... Quid ille respondit? Quae est mater mea et qui sunt fratres mei? Et extendens manum in discipulos suos: Hii sunt fratres mei. Quisquis facit voluntatem Patris mei qui misit me, ipse mihi frater et soror et mater est. Synagoga respuit unde generatus est, invenit quos regeneravit ... Habes unde sis frater Christi, ama cum illo paternam hereditatem. Habes unde sis soror Christi, ama cum illo eandem hereditatem. Habes unde sis mater Christi, si quod illa utero, tu corde conceperis. In huiusmodi necessitudinum nominibus humanus angustatur affectus. In carnali propagatione non potest quisque unius hominis esse frater et mater ... Sed caritas non angustatur ... Non irascantur parentes. Multum enim eis defertur quibus solus Deus praefertur ... Honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam. Agnosco, Deus mihi dixit ... Amo, amo omnino, amo et te. Sed qui me docuit ut amem te, melior te est ... mecum ama illum qui me docuit ut amem te sed non plus quam illum".*

least, Sg 2:4 "Set love in order in me".⁹³ We must love in the right order, so that we ourselves may be rightly ordered. We are guilty if we despise our parents, but we ought to honour them in due order, that is, according to their place within the order of things. This does not mean, however, that Augustine completely passes over human love, as appears from the following remarks: "Someone has a spouse, someone has children. They cry out: Love us. Answer them: I love you. Say to your spouse: If I did not love you, I would not have married you. Say to your children: If I did not love you, I would not have begotten you, I would not have brought you up". Then, Augustine refers to the example of the martyrs, declaring that it is more difficult for a martyr to leave his spouse than his children. The spouse may appeal to the text "What God has united, a human being must not divide" (Mt 19:6). The conclusion of this sermon is: We should love father, mother, children, and spouse in a right and affectionate way, and it would be a sin not to do so. But none of us should love them more than Christ.⁹⁴

A certain Hilarius asked Augustine how to understand the text that the rich cannot enter the kingdom of heaven unless they sell all they own (cf. Mt 19:21). Augustine makes a distinction between selling and letting go (or: giving up, renouncing). With regard to the text: Everyone who has left all things for my sake, will be repaid hundred times over in this world, and possess eternal life in the world to come (cf. Mt 19:29), Augustine remarks that even a wife is mentioned, from which it appears that a human person sometimes has to make a choice between leaving a wife or leaving Christ. And this applies also to children, parents, brothers and sisters in case of imperative necessity where a choice is inevitable. Just as in letter 243, Augustine refers to the man intending to build a tower, but first has to work out the cost to see if he has enough to complete it, followed by the admonition that nobody can be a disciple of Christ unless he gives up all his possessions (Lk 14:28 and 33). Therefore, if we have to suffer the loss of our riches for the sake of faith in Christ, we hate our riches; if this

⁹³ It goes without saying that the idea of the order of love is present in Augustine's works from the very beginning.

⁹⁴ Ib. 8-11. ib. 45-47: "Dilige, inquit, parentes, sed non plus me. Clamat tibi sponsa eius: *Ordinate in me caritatem*. Ama ordinate, ut sis ordinatus ... Paululum ergo de medio parentes non spreti sed ordinate honorati discedant. Uxor est cuiquam; filii sunt cuiquam. Clamant: Ama nos. Responde: Amo. Dic uxori: Si non amarem, non ducerem. Dic filiis: Si non amarem, non generarem, non educarem ... De filiis facile est. Plus urget uxor: Noli me, inquit, dimittere. Discedes et vidua remanebo. *Deus nos coniunxit, homo non separet* ... Nemo ergo diligit plus quam Christum patrem, matrem, filios, uxorem. Ea ipsa quae recte diliguntur, quae pie diliguntur, in quibus peccatum est si non diligantur, nemo diligit plus quam Christum".

world threatens us with bereavement or separation from our families for the sake of Christ, we hate our parents, brothers, children, wives; we have even to go so far as to hate our own life, rather than being forsaken by a forsaken Christ (cf. Lk 14:26). We find here again a reference to martyrdom.⁹⁵

V. TEXTS FROM 415 TILL 428

In the last part of Augustine's life, we find rather an affirmation of what we have seen before. Some texts, however, express his ideas more explicitly. In 417 or 418, Augustine preached a sermon on Mt 12:46-50. Augustine faced there the problem: how could Christ, with any sense of filial duty, say this, whereas He was fully aware of the greatness of his mother? The answer is that human affection may not keep from the divine work that ought not to be delayed. Christ did not condemn maternal affection, but He gave a great example that mothers must be ignored for the sake of God's work. And this can even be done out of love. Christ teaches us to ignore our parents, and at the same time to love our parents. We love them in the right order and devotedly (*ordinate et pie*) when we do not put them before God, for "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10:37). If we pay careful attention to Jesus' words "more than me", He urges us rather to love our parents, and He does in no way deny the commandment "Honour your father and mother". He taught us the right order (*ordinem*) of love, not the subversion of filial love. We should love, honour, and submit to our parents, but if God calls us to a greater work, which could be hindered by parental affection, we must keep the right order, and not turn love upside down. Here we discover an impli-

⁹⁵ *Epist.* 157,4,31-35. CSEL 44,478-482 (d. 415): "*Quicumque dimiserit omnia sua propter me, accipiet in hoc saeculo centuplum et in futuro vitam aeternam possidebit. Aliud est 'dimiserit' aliud 'vendiderit': nam in his, quae dimittenda mandavit, etiam uxor commemorata est ... Quid sibi ergo volunt ista praecepta ... nisi quia incurrit aliquando necessitatis articulus, ubi aut uxor dimittatur aut Christus ... Hoc et de filiis atque parentibus, hoc et de fratribus ac sororibus intellegitur propter Christum esse omnes dimittendos, cum proponitur ista condicio ... adprehendet potius turrem fortitudinis a facie inimici, quia, cum eam in sua aedificaret fide, computavit sumptus, quibus perfici posset ... Et si forte pro fide Christi pecuniaria damna perpetienda sunt, oderunt divitias suas; si suorum orbitates vel separationes pro Christo minatur hic mundus, oderunt parentes, fratres, filios, uxores; postremo si de ipsa huius corporis vita cum adversario paciscendum est, ne desertus deserat Christus, oderunt insuper et animam suam".*

cit reference to Sg 4:2 *Ordinate in me caritatem*.⁹⁶ In the following paragraphs, Augustine deals at great length with the manichaean objection that Jesus had no human mother; if this were true, the manichees must also admit that the disciples had no father. Then follows an explanation of the text "Blessed the womb that bore you ... Rather blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk 11:27-28), with the famous passage "Mary is part of the church, a holy member, a quite exceptional member, a supremely wonderful member, but still a member of the whole body".⁹⁷ The sermon ends with the emphasis on the fact that we all are members of Christ. It is not so difficult to understand that we are brothers and sisters of Christ, for the only Son did not wish to be alone, but wished us to be heirs of the Father. It is more difficult to understand how we are mothers of Christ. We can become mothers of Christ by bringing whomever we can along to the bath of baptism, that is, by bringing others along to be born.⁹⁸

The following of the Lord wherever He goes, and the answer of someone: "I will go and bury my father first" (Lk 9:57-59) is the theme of sermon 100 (d. 417 or 395?). When the Lord destines people for the gos-

⁹⁶ *Sermo Denis* 25,3-4. MA I,158-159: "Hoc enim, quod modo proposui, multos habet sinus nodosque quaestionis; quomodo pie dominus Christus contempserit matrem, non qualemcumque matrem ... Talem matrem ille contempsit, ne operi, quod agebat, maternus se insereret, eumque impediret affectus ... Non ergo dominus Christus maternum damnavit affectum, sed contemnendae matris pro opere dei magnum in se ipso demonstravit exemplum ... Docet ergo te Christus contemnere parentes tuos, amare parentes tuos. Tunc enim ordinate et pie amas parentes, quando deo non praeponis parentes: *Qui amat* - domini verba sunt - *qui amat patrem aut matrem plus quam me, non est me dignus*. His verbis quasi videtur admonuisse ne amares: immo, si attendas, admonuit ut amares. Potuit enim dicere, *Qui amat patrem aut matrem, non est me dignus*. Non hoc dixit, ne loqueretur contra legem quam dedit, ipse enim legem illam per Moysen famulum suum dedit, ubi scriptum est: *Honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam*. Non contrariam legem promulgavit, sed illam commendavit; et ordinem te docuit, non pietatem subvertit: *Qui amat patrem aut matrem, sed plus quam me*. Amet ergo, sed non plus quam me: deus deus est, homo homo est. Ama parentes, obsequere parentibus, honora parentes; sed, si te deus ad aliquid amplius vocat, ubi possit impedimento esse parentalis affectus, serva ordinem, noli evertere caritatem".

⁹⁷ Ib. 5-6. ib. 160-162: the discussion with the manichaean interpretation: "Non patres non habebant: sed ubi venturum est ad regenerationem, quaeratur patrem regenerationis; non damnetur pater generationis, sed ei praeponatur pater regenerationis". Ib. 7. ib. 162-163: the laudation of Mary.

⁹⁸ Ib. 8. ib. 163-164: "Intellego ergo fratres nos esse Christi, sorores Christi esse sanctas et fideles feminas. Matres Christi quomodo possumus intellegere? ... Fuistis filii, estote et matres. Filii matris, quando baptizati estis, tunc membra Christi nati estis: adducite ad lavacrum baptismatis quos potestis; ut, sicut filii fuistis quando nati estis, sic etiam ducendo ad nascendum matres Christi esse possitis".

pel, he does not accept any excuse based on natural and temporal love, which is an obstacle to his call. It is true that the commandment "Honour your father and your mother" is the first one with a promise (Eph 6:2). However, every thing has its own place, its own time, its own reality. One must honour a father, one must obey God. One must love a parent, but prefer the creator. Jesus says as it were: I am calling you to the gospel; I need you for another task; and this task is greater than the one you wish to perform. Augustine founds his viewpoint on Sg 2:4 "*Ordinate in me caritatem*" and on the example of the mother of the Maccabees (2 Mc 7:22). Therefore, love your parents, but put God before your parents. What the mother of the Maccabees taught her sons is what Jesus was teaching with the words *Sequere me*.⁹⁹ In 420, the bishop refutes an anonymous author who holds that Christ and the God of the law and the prophets are opposed to each other. This foolish author, Augustine remarks, can maintain that Christ himself is opposed to himself or that they were two different persons, not one Christ, namely, the one who said "Peace I leave you" (Jn 14:27), and the other who said "I did not come to bring peace to the earth but a sword" (Mt 10:34). Augustine refers to his books against Faustus and Adimantus in which he has already refuted a similar opinion.¹⁰⁰

Just before and after the year 420, there are some texts dealing with Jesus' words: *Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier?* (Jn 2:4). Augustine's interpretation remains the same as he had given in *De vera religione* dating from 390. Only the way he expresses himself is more refined, e. g. by speaking explicitly of human affection. Jesus spoke these words, for He had not taken from Mary what he had in his divinity. But He showed his human affection for his mother when He committed Mary to the care of his dis-

⁹⁹ *Sermo* 100,1,2-2,2. PL 38,603-604: "Dominus autem Christus quando parat homines Evangelio, nullam excusationem vult interponi carnalis hujus temporalisque pietatis ... Et Paulus apostolus in Epistola sua posuit et dixit: *Hoc est mandatum primum in repromissione*. Quod? *Honora patrem tuum, et matrem tuam*. Deus utique dixit. Volebat ergo iste juvenis obtemperare Deo, et sepelire patrem suum: sed est locus, et est tempus, et est res, quae huic rei, huic tempori, huic loco serviat. Honorandus est pater, sed obediendum est Deo. Amandus est generator, sed praeponendus est Creator. Ego, inquit, ad Evangelium te voco, ad aliud opus mihi necessarius es: majus est hoc, quam quod vis facere ... Quid est *Ordinate in me caritatem*? Facite gradus, et cuique quod debetur, restituite. Nolite anteriora posterioribus subdere ... Attendite matrem Machabaeorum ...".

¹⁰⁰ *Contra adversarium legis et prophetarum* II,12,38. CCL 49,128. (d. 420): "... potest vanus dicere ipsum Christum sibi esse contrarium aut duos fuisse, non unum, inter se scilicet repugnantes; alium, qui dixit *Pacem do vobis*; et alium, qui dixit *Non veni pacem mittere in terram, sed gladium*".

ciple John (Jn 19:26-27).¹⁰¹ The words "human affection", with regard to putting Mary under the care of John, are also used in the last part of his commentary on the gospel of John (d. after 419).¹⁰² Augustine emphasizes now that on the cross Jesus taught us an important moral lesson, namely that children ought to take care of their parents. He refers then to 1 Tm 5:8, a text not yet quoted explicitly in our context: "Anyone who does not look after his own relations, especially members of his own household, denies the faith and is worse than an unbeliever". Nothing belongs more to the household than parents in relation to their children, and children in relation to their parents.¹⁰³ We find this text also in a letter dated vaguely after 395. A married woman, Ecdicia, had given away a quantity of goods without the knowledge of her husband. Augustine reproaches her that parents may not wish a child to be stripped of the means of support in this life, otherwise the father could be blamed of neglecting the care of his household.¹⁰⁴

An important text about the natural goodness of God's creatures, namely infants, is found in a work against the pelagians (d. 420). To criticize Augustine's concept of original sin, the pelagians appealed to a text of Cyprian (*Epist.* 64,4) who wrote that people kiss a newborn child, even before it is born again through the sacrament of baptism. Augustine answers them that Cyprian is right in arguing to do so. This kiss is rather a restraint and correction of the horror of human feeling regarding kissing infants fresh from the womb. However, this does not mean at all that Cyprian denied the existence of original sin. Kissing a baby is praising the creator and the creature, the workman and the work. In the kiss of infants the hands, recently at work, of God are considered and venerated. He who

¹⁰¹ *Sermo* 218,10,10. PL 38,1086: "... congruenter tunc humanum affectum, quando ut homo moriebatur, ostendit".

¹⁰² *In Joh. evang. tr.* 119,1. CCL 36,658: "Tunc ergo divina facturus, non divinitatis, sed infirmitatis matrem velut incognitam repellebat; nunc autem humana iam patiens, ex qua fuerat factus homo, affectu commendabat humano".

¹⁰³ *Ib.* 119,2. *ib.* 658: "Moralis igitur insinuat locus. Facit quod faciendum admonet, et exemplo suo suos instruxit praeceptor bonus, ut a filiis piis impendatur cura parentibus; tamquam lignum illud ubi erant fixa membra morientis, etiam cathedra fuerit magistri docentis. Ex hac sana doctrina didicerat Paulus apostolus quod docebat, quando dicebat: *Si quis autem suis, et maxime domesticis non providet, fidem negavit, et est infideli deterior. Quid autem tam cuique domesticum quam parentes filiis, aut parentibus filiis?*".

¹⁰⁴ *Epist.* 262,8. CSEL 57,627. Cf. *Sermo* 356,3. ed. LAMBOT, *S. Aur. Augustini Sermones selecti duodeviginti*. Ultraieci 1950, p. 134. (d. 426), where Augustine considers the monks living in the same monastery as *domestici*.

believes in original sin, does not condemn either nature or marriage.¹⁰⁵

In the commentary on the gospel of John (but also written after 419), it is said that the commandment of love of neighbour is a very old one. But how can Jesus say: "I give you a new commandment: love one another" (Jn 13:34)? In order to distinguish it from carnal love, He added "just as I have loved you". For husbands and wives love one another, as well as parents and children, and all people bound together by human relationship (*necessitudo humana*). Christ's love, however, renews us, makes us new beings, heirs of the New Testament, singers of the new song. It was this love that renewed already the righteous, the patriarchs and the prophets, during the period of the first covenant. Therefore, we should not love one another, simply because we are human beings, but because we are God's and sons of the Highest. This love means death to the world and life with God.¹⁰⁶ According to Augustine, a merely natural love is not enough for a Christian. If we love our neighbour in a human way only, we easily neglect God as our supreme good. Therefore, to love our neighbour as ourselves means desiring that the neighbour may find his or her good where we ourselves find it, namely in God. By saying "Love one another just as I have loved you", Jesus distinguishes his love from that with which human beings love one another as human beings. Jesus loved us in order to lead us to God, his Father. Not everyone has this kind of love. Augustine remarks that only a few people love one another with the intention that God may be all in all.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum* IV,8,24. CSEL 60,547: "Nempe ille, qui sic laudat creatorem atque creaturam, opificem atque opus, ut humani sensus horrorem quo dedignantur homines recentes ab utero parvulos osculari, creatoris ipsius interposita veneratione conpescat et corrigat dicens in illius aetatis osculo recentes dei manus esse cogitandas. Numquid ergo confitens originale peccatum aut naturam damnavit aut nuptias?". Speaking of Gen 29:11: "Jacob kissed Rachel and burst into tears", Augustine remarks that in ancient times it was a custom that neighbouring people (*propinqui*) kissed one another, and that this is still so in many places: *Quaest. in Heptateuchum* I,87. CCL 33,32-33.

¹⁰⁶ *In Joh. evang. tr.* 65,1. ib. 490-491: "... ista dilectio quam dominus ut a carnali dilectione distingueret, addidit: *sicut dilexi vos*. Nam diligunt invicem mariti et uxores, parentes et filii, et quaecumque alia inter se homines necessitudo humana devinxerit ... Dilectio ista nos innovat, ut simus homines novi ... *Mandatum novum do vobis, ut vos invicem diligatis* non sicut se diligunt ... homines, quoniam homines sunt; sed sicut se diligunt, quoniam dii sunt et filii Altissimi omnes ... Immo ipsa dilectio est mors nostra saeculo et vita cum Deo".

¹⁰⁷ Ib. 83,3. ib. 536: "Discernitur quippe ista dilectio ab illa dilectione qua se invicem diligunt homines sicut homines; nam ut discerneretur adiunctum est: *sicut dilexi vos*. Utquid enim diligit nos Christus, nisi ut regnare possimus cum Christo? ... Qui autem se propter habendum Deum diligunt, ipsi se diligunt; ergo ut se diligant, Deum diligunt. Non

In the City of God (d. about 426), Augustine praises the consolation of the sincere faith and mutual affection of true and good friends. We are worried that no evil things may befall them. Their death brings us sadness. Who forbids such sadness must forbid, if he can, all friendly conversation, all friendly affection, must break with harsh heartlessness all bonds of human relationships (*necessitudinum*), or decree that one must relate to one's relatives (*eis utendum*) in such a way that no pleasure may be derived from them.¹⁰⁸ Relationships are necessary for building up social life. Love is accorded its due importance so that human beings, for whom harmony is useful and honourable, may be bound by ties of various relationships (*necessitudinum*). This is the reason why the human race had to increase so that love could extend over a greater number of people.¹⁰⁹ The person who loves God does not err in loving him or herself. From this it follows that one should be concerned that also the neighbour loves God. Thus one ought to be concerned (*consulat*) for wife, children, household, and for other people as far as possible, and one should wish that they take the same care of us. The order of peace among human beings consists first in doing no harm to others, and, secondly, in doing good to others. In the first place, then, we have to care for our own household, inasmuch as the order of nature or of human society provides us with a readier and easier access to the members of our household for seeking their interests (*consulendi*). Within this context, Augustine refers again to 1 Tm 5:8: "Anyone who does not look after his own relations, especially members of his own household, denies the faith and is worse than an unbeliever".¹¹⁰

Another important text is found in the same work. Speaking of two

est haec dilectio in omnibus hominibus: pauci se propterea diligunt, ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus".

¹⁰⁸ *De civitate dei* XIX,8. CCL 48,672: "... quid nos consolatur in hac humana societate erroribus aerumnisque plenissima nisi fides non ficta et mutua dilectio verorum et bonorum amicorum? ... Quam qui prohibet, prohibeat, si potest, amica conloquia, interdicat amicalem vel interdicat affectum, humanarum omnium necessitudinum vincula mentis inimiti stupore dirumpat aut sic eis utendum censeat, ut nulla ex eis animum dulcedo perfundat".

¹⁰⁹ *Ib.* XV,16. *ib.* 477. (d. 420): "Habita est enim ratio rectissima caritatis, ut homines, quibus esset utilis atque honesta concordia, diversarum necessitudinum vinculis necterentur".

¹¹⁰ *Ib.* XIX,14. *ib.* 681: "... atque ille in se diligendo non errat qui Deum diligit: consequens est, ut etiam proximo ad diligendum Deum consulat, quem iubetur sicut seipsum diligere (sic uxori, sic filiis, sic domesticis, sic ceteris quibus potuerit hominibus), et ad hoc sibi a proximo, si forte indiget, consuli velit ... Primitus ergo inest ei suorum cura; ad eos quippe habet oportuniorem facilioremque aditum consulendi, vel naturae ordine vel ipsius societatis humanae. Unde apostolus dicit: *Quisquis autem suis et maxime domesticis non providet, fidem denegat et est infideli deterior*".

sorts of sins, Augustine makes a distinction between grave sins which prevent from having Christ as a foundation, and forgivable sins which do not constitute an absolute obstacle to have Christ as a foundation (cf. 1 Cor 3:11-13). If someone places earthly love in a human and carnal way before Christ, he or she can neither be saved through fire nor be saved at all, for this person cannot be with the Saviour, who speaks most clearly on this point: "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me". But if one loves them in a corporeal way (*carnaliter*), not putting them before Christ and preferring to lose them rather than Christ, this person will be saved through fire. Augustine underlines that he is not speaking here only of sexual intercourse used for carnal pleasures, but of all the things which bear the names of dutiful love (*nomina pietatis*). On the other hand, those who love in the Spirit of Christ, have a perfect love, and there is nothing in them that has to be consumed as wood, hay, or stubble.¹¹¹

In *De cura pro mortuis gerenda* (d. 424-425), the bishop speaks of the relationship with his mother. He applies to her the text "My father and my mother have abandoned me, but God has taken me up" (Ps 26:10). If his mother would still be here on earth, she would never abandon him in difficult circumstances; she would console him always in his sadness, that mother who by land and sea followed him, and loved him with a wonderful love. But she is no longer here, and can no longer take part in his cares and affairs. Our consolation now is that God is our Father.¹¹²

In a sermon dating from about 426, Augustine admonishes children to do what scripture says, namely, to pay due honour to their parents, but at the same time he warns parents not to take revenge on their children,

¹¹¹ *De civitate dei* XXI,26(4). CCL 48,799. (d. about 426): "Quicumque autem, non dico uxorem, cuius etiam commixtione carnis ad carnalem utitur voluptatem, sed ipsa quae ab eius modi delectationibus aliena sunt nomina pietatis humano more carnaliter diligendo Christo anteponit, non eum habet in fundamento ... quia esse cum Salvatore non poterit, qui de hac re apertissime loquens ait: *Qui amat patrem aut matrem plus quam me, non est me dignus* ... Verum qui has necessitudines sic amat carnaliter, ut tamen eas Christo Domino non praeponat, malitque ipsis carere quam Christo ... per ignem erit salvus ... Porro qui patrem, matrem, filios, filias secundum Christum dilexerit, ut ad eius regnum obtinendum eique cohaerendum illis consulat ... absit ut ista dilectio reperiat in lignis, feno et stipula consumenda". What Augustine means by "saved through fire" is not clear; some think that he is speaking of the fire of purgatory.

¹¹² *De cura pro mortuis gerenda* 13,16. CSEL 41,647-648: "Si rebus viventium interessent animae mortuorum ... me ipsum pia mater nulla nocte desereret, quae terra marique secuta est, ut mecum viveret. Absit enim, ut facta sit vita feliciore crudelis usque adeo ut, quando aliquid angit cor meum, nec tristem filium consoletur, quem dilexit unice, quem numquam voluit maestum videre. Sed profecto quod sacer psalmus personat, verum est: *Quoniam pater meus et mater mea dereliquerunt me, dominus autem adsumpsit me*".

when they are offended, but to remember that they are parents.¹¹³ A last text, dating from about 428, deals with Mt 10:37: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me". Christ came to change our love, and to make lovers of the heavenly life out of earthly lovers. However, he did not abolish love of parents, wife, children, but put them in the right order (*ordinavit*), according to the Song of Songs 2:4 "He put love in order in me". Love your father who begot you, but not above the one who created you. Love your mother, but not above the church, who bore you to eternal life. From the love you have for your parents weigh up how much you ought to love God and the church. Love your wife, love your children according to the will of God, in such a way that you take care that they worship God with you. Here also Augustine is referring to the example of the martyrs.¹¹⁴

CONCLUSION

Taking into consideration the different periods which we have distinguished in a more or less artificial way, we see clearly a certain evolution in Augustine's thought.

In the first period before his priesthood, there seems to be a difference between texts in which he is speaking in a concrete experiential way and those expressing his abstract theoretical insights. He emphasizes that human relationships, especially friendship, should be orientated towards the rational soul of the beloved person. A human being is to be loved as a human being, that is, as a rational being created in the image of God. The world of the senses and human affection are still underestimated. Human relationships are private goods, and as such do not belong to the essence of human nature, because they are due to the Fall. Although care for the body of the neighbour is not passed over, it is not much stressed, for it should be directed towards the health of the soul. Love of neighbour is still described as *gradus* and *cunabula* which will be no longer the case after

¹¹³ *Sermo* 323,1,1. PL 38,1445: "Discite, filii, quod dicit Scriptura, reddere honorem parentibus debitum. Sed et vos, parentes, quando offendimini, parentes vos esse recordamini".

¹¹⁴ *Sermo* 344,2. PL 39,1512: "Amorem parentum, uxoris, filiorum, non abstulit, sed ordinavit: non dixit, Qui amat; sed, *qui amat super me*. Hoc est quod Ecclesia loquitur in Canticis Canticorum: *Ordinavit in me caritatem* ... Ama ergo patrem, sed noli super Deum tuum. Ama matrem, sed noli super Ecclesiam, quae te genuit ad vitam aeternam. Denique ex ipsorum parentum amore perpende quantum diligere debeas Deum et Ecclesiam ... Ama uxorem, ama filios secundum Deum, ut consulas eis ad Deum colendum tecum".

393. One should not interpret, however, these terms as referring to purely human effort. Love of neighbour is based on the authority of the Bible and Christ. Augustine quotes in this period only three scriptural texts: Mt 12:46-50, Jn 2:4, and Lk 14:26. Nevertheless, we find here the nucleus of his principles which will be elaborated and nuanced in the following periods.

In the second period, Augustine's main concern (especially against the manichaeans) is to show that there is no contradiction between the positive precepts and the negative prohibitions in the Bible regarding human relationships. However, a new aspect comes now clearly to the fore when he mentions explicitly that a choice imposes itself if love of human beings is a hindrance or obstacle to the ministry of the divine word or to reaching the kingdom of God. In his *Retractationes* (see note 51), Augustine indicates that this was his usual later interpretation of Lk 14:26. But in this period human relationships are still spoken of in a rather negative way. One should love the persons as such, but not the relationships with them. After *De sermone domini in monte*, we find no longer texts asserting that human relationships are a consequence of original sin. The most important evolution is clearly due to the study of the Pauline theology. The influence of Paul makes itself strongly felt in Augustine's emphasis on the unity between love of God and love of neighbour. The scriptural orchestration is considerably enlarged in comparison with the three texts of the preceding period. No less than six new quotations are added: Mt 23:9, Lk 14:26b (one should hate *insuper animam suam*), Ex 20:12, Lk 9:59-60, Deut 33:9, and Mt 19:29.

In the third period, the distinction between private and common goods, already present during the second period, is largely elaborated. The limitations inherent to private love ought to be transcended by the greater openness of spiritual love. On the other hand, the delightfulness of loving natural relationships is recognized, although this sort of love is not a specifically human feature, for irrational animals love their young as well. Carnal affection ought to be hated in as far as it to the detriment of the life to come. There is also the assertion that wife and husband have more rights to each other's presence than parents have vis-à-vis their children. Regarding the biblical texts, we find implicit references to the mother of the Maccabean martyrs (2 M 7:22-23) and to Mt 10:34 with the words "the spiritual sword of the word"; moreover, a literal quotation of Eph 6:2-3 is given.

The fourth period is characterized by a greater development of the text that Jesus did not come to bring peace, but a sword (Mt 10:34-35), and still more by the distinction between lawful and unlawful human love.

It is a moral duty to love wife, children, parents, and friends, which is impossible without faith in love. There where this love is lacking, the human being would fall into indifference and cruelty. Natural affection and care for the well-being of the own household or family are gifts of God's mercy. Nevertheless, relatives or friends may not be loved more than Christ. "Not more than Christ" is now based on a literal quotation of Mt 10:37. Another new quotation within the context of this period is Sg 2:4: "Set love in order in me".

The continued effect of the text of the Song of Songs can be seen as the characteristic of Augustine's texts in his last writings. Here we find expressions such as "human affection, maternal affection, parental affection". The statement that we should not love human beings more than Christ (Mt 10:37) is considered as a confirmation of the commandment to love our parents. Good human relationships are a necessity for the human race, and even corporeal love does not necessarily separate people from loving Christ. At the same time, it is emphasized that a merely human love is not enough for a believer; for we ought to love just as Christ has loved us (Jn 13:34). Although the dates of the texts are very uncertain, 1 Tm 5:8 which commands us to pay particular attention to the members of our household, may possibly be considered as a new scriptural quotation.

From all this it appears that there is a constant in Augustine's thought, namely, that preference should be given to spiritual relationships over corporeal or natural (without denying their limited goodness¹¹⁵) relationships. With the progress of the years, however, Augustine's views became more and more concrete and nuanced. The scriptural orchestration grew steadily. Natural love was considered as a moral obligation. But natural love had to be transcended by loving human beings in God and

¹¹⁵ The same applies to Augustine's attitude towards natural virtues. See J. WANG TCH'ANG-TCHE, *Saint Augustin et les vertus des païens*. Paris 1938. C. MAYER, 'Pietas' und 'vera pietas quae caritas est'. *Zwei Kernfragen der Auseinandersetzung Augustins mit der heidnischen Antike*, in: *Augustiniana Traiectina* (ed. J. DEN BOEFT et J. VAN OORT). Paris 1987, 119-136: "Nicht dass diese Güter (= natürliche Tugenden) schlecht wären! Im Gegenteil, die christliche Ethik bejaht sie, allerdings im Rahmen einer sie zugleich transzendierenden Zielsetzung". In the context of this article, we must take into account the biblical extension of the notion *proximus* as Augustine describes this, for example, in *Sermo Denis* 16,2. MA I,76: "*Quis est mihi proximus?* Putabat dicturum dominum: Pater tuus et mater tua, coniux tua, filii tui, sorores tuae. Non hoc respondit, sed qui volebat commendare omnem hominem omni homini proximum, instituit narrationem (Lc 10:29-37)".

Christ.¹¹⁶ Only in that case love reaches its Christian fullness. At their deepest level, Augustine's texts must be seen in the light of God's absolute transcendence.

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¹¹⁶ In spite of the fact that we may not put our final hope on a human being, here on earth there is a certain anticipation of the eschatological *frui*, in other words: in this life we possess an imperfect fruition of the neighbour. Cf. *De doctrina christiana* I,33,37. CCL 32,27. (d. 397): "Cum autem homine in deo frueris, deo potius quam homine frueris ... Inde ad Philemonem Paulus: *Ita frater*, inquit, *ego te fruar in domino*. Quod si non addidisset *in domino* et *te fruar* tantum dixisset, in eo constituisset spem beatitudinis suae". See L. VERHEIJEN, *Le premier livre du De doctrina christiana d'Augustin. Un traité de "télécologie" biblique*, in: *Augustiniana Traiectina* (ed. J. DEN BOEFT - J. VAN OORT). Paris 1987, 169-187.