

# FORMATION FOR FRIENDSHIP

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THE INTEGRATION OF affectivity into both service and prayer, as the goal for which persons dedicated to ministry should strive, has been repeatedly pointed out by spiritual writers in the period after Vatican II. They claim that rigorous isolation of human warmth from the essential aspects of ministry, rather than harmonious co-ordination of personal feelings and professional obligations, prevents those engaged in ministry from manifesting the 'pastoral love' which the Council proposes as their ideal.<sup>1</sup> The usual motive for the strict separation of affectivity, zeal and contemplation in the consciousness and behaviour of pastoral ministers is their adherence to an asceticism of feeling-denial as a guarantee that their service of others, while charitable, remain disinterested and controlled. In contrast, the union of the three aspects is grounded on an asceticism of feeling-integration by which pastoral ministers assure that their service of others, while selfless, be regarded as warm and convincing.

At present the latter form of spiritual discipline still meets considerable resistance on the part of those committed to ministry for two principal reasons: it was not presented to them during formation as a valid path towards self-abnegation, and it has led some of their companions who have adopted it to carry out their pastoral service only with difficulty or to leave it entirely. Because of this suspicion and disappointment, the asceticism of feeling-integration is caricatured by some pastoral ministers as a thinly veiled secular humanism which evades the folly of the cross, and values intimate relationships to such an inordinate degree that the self-sacrifice clearly required of persons dedicated to ministry becomes intolerable. Yet, many spiritual directors are dubious that genuine christian mortification has been practised by pastoral ministers who abruptly break affective bonds, so as to be delivered from the darkness and bewilderment they initially cause. Mental depression, disordered affectivity, boredom with the apostolate, and scepticism with regard to mystical union with God often accompany such radical sacrifice of being loved by others and loving them in return. Spiritual directors generally agree that an emotional attachment to another, which compels one in pastoral

service to earnest discernment about how to conjoin this love with love of God, frequently marks the start of an unexpected passage from a perfunctory ministry lacking interior peace and depth to a productive ministry arising from and leading to contemplation.<sup>2</sup>

Because of the notable advantage and residual distrust of the asceticism of feeling-integration as an authentic means of fulfilling the gospel injunction to die to self so as to live for others and God (Jn 12, 24-25), the presentation of this synthetic approach to christian spirituality should be firmly based both on theological and psychological insights. If such a solid foundation were provided for the gradual fusion of affectivity, zeal and contemplation on the part of those dedicated to ministry, the asceticism of feeling-integration could serve as the *leitmotif* of an entire formation programme centred on pastoral love. This programme would attempt from the start to emphasize the interconnection between love for particular others, love for many people and love for God as the very core of the spiritual training of pastoral ministers.<sup>3</sup> In view of such a possibility, the purpose of this essay is twofold. Firstly, to help formation directors appreciate the benefits of the asceticism of feeling-integration, or of christian friendship, according to which human affectivity is to be respected as the sphere in which the Holy Spirit teaches pastoral ministers to love some persons profoundly, to participate in the zeal of Christ in serving many, and to enter through this love and service into mystical union with the Father. Secondly, to explain the progressive phases through which the asceticism of christian friendship, like all authentic human love, must normally evolve, the spiritual discernment which is exacted at each stage, and the constant need for patience, prayer and courage in the face of the emotional longing at each step for greater union with particular others, with all others and with the Other. Furthermore, it seems best to conjoin these two objectives by allowing the first to be achieved in the course of unfolding the process entailed in the second. Thus, the following reflections are guided by the critical points regularly encountered in practising an asceticism of christian friendship: attraction, trust, honesty, communion, service and joy.

*Attraction: is the friend threat or sacrament?*

Pastoral ministers, trained to esteem the asceticism of feeling-denial and to view their task principally as the exercise of universal charity, often panic and pull back when someone whom they serve well in the professional sense returns their charity with an offer of friendship: 'You listen to me, whereas my husband no longer does'; 'I was disappointed because you did not ring me up'; 'Are

you being nice because it is required, or do you really care about me?' A desire to suppress and escape their feelings can also arise when pastoral ministers on their part notice that a particular person whom they intend to help in a disinterested way looms large in their consciousness, stirs latent dimensions of their affectivity, and places in doubt their supposedly clear motivation for ecclesial service.<sup>4</sup> Since such fear and withdrawal frequently result in confusion and hurt on the part of those whose affection they deny and evade, persons involved in ministry might eventually ask how they can claim to love all whom they serve in Christ's name if they cannot love a particular person in a calm and confident way. A spiritual director, advocating the asceticism of feeling-integration, would encourage pastoral ministers perplexed in this way to distinguish between friendship, through which one discovers the other 'half of one's soul',<sup>5</sup> and charity, by which one extends particular loves to all; the two forms of love do not contradict but are oriented to each other. In the special friend, pastoral ministers encounter a living sign of divine love for them; to all others whom they treat charitably they extend the effect of human friendship and of that with the triune God. Emotional attraction, therefore, need not be a potentially devastating threat to ministry, but a thoroughly graced beginning of a discernment process whose first stage aims to determine whether the other is to be recognized as a sacrament of divine love who should not be avoided but responded to courageously and peacefully. 'Would it not be more in accord with Christ's attitude to friendship', a spiritual director might suggest to a pastoral minister struggling with a mutual attraction, 'to say to the other "Thank you for expressing your love for me. I also regard you as a special friend and gift of God. Now we must decide together before God what this all-engrossing sacrament of his loving presence means for each of us"?''

Of course, self-deception may take place in deciding that an experience of attraction to another is not a threat but a sacrament, since pastoral ministers, whether single, celibate or married, do not find it easy to bring into harmony their friendships arising from ministry and their primary vocational commitment. For this reason, the discernment process which they undertake must conjoin sound psychological principles with traditional christian wisdom. St Augustine offers concrete criteria for this stage of discernment by attributing to the Holy Spirit the spiritual gain which accrues from particular friendships:

If we meet good people who rejoice with the joyful and weep with the sorrowful, who know how to speak words of comfort, we shall

nearly always find the rough made smoother, the burden lightened and what is vexatious overcome. But in fact, God does this through them, for God gives his own goodness to them through the Holy Spirit. . . . Wherever people are without a friend, not a single thing in the world is friendly to them.<sup>6</sup>

The other is recognized as a sacrament of God, according to this passage, when the hitherto seemingly desolate world suddenly becomes friendly because the activity of the comforter, the Holy Spirit, is made translucent in people who embody the refreshing gifts of joy, comfort, empathy and alleviation.

Why then is the activity of the Holy Spirit in those who appeal to persons dedicated to ministry at first so frightening to them? Jesus reveals that the power of the Spirit is like a torrent of wind (Jn 3, 8) or a spreading fire (Lk 3, 16) which creates clean air or open space only through what initially appears to be a destructive process. At the start of christian friendships obstacles to the love generated by the Holy Spirit are blown down, and foliage keeping out his light is seared. Yet the effect of the Spirit's battering of the heart is an effusion of calm excitement about God and the world, which pastoral ministers might previously have experienced but not to a great degree until they accept a seemingly threatening person as a channel of grace. They have to undergo a personal Pentecost, otherwise transcendental openness to divine love remains a fixed theological tenet rather than a continual spiritual adventure.<sup>7</sup> Having arrived at the point of welcoming emotional attraction to another as a call to receive a sacrament of divine love, the first stage of the process of discernment, in which the offer of friendship involves the pastoral minister, opens on to the second.

*Trust: to withdraw or become intimate with the friend?*

In the letter quoted above, St Augustine states that 'nearly always' the emergence of a friend smooths what was rough. At times those committed to ministry, having just faced rather than turned away from persons who are sacraments of divine consolation in their trials, may soon wish once again to retreat from them. They do not fully trust themselves or the others. Used to remaining somewhat emotionally independent of those whose sufferings and joys they witness, they live uneasily with dependence on those who now comfort them. Their mistrust becomes especially acute as they find themselves eager to symbolize their dependence by being with their friends frequently, so as to bestow on them the self-gift of intimacy, the willingness to give and receive expressions of self-revelation and tenderness. Can persons engaged in ministry entrust

themselves to such intimacy without compromising the sacramental character of their friendships? Would they not seem uncertain about whether God is the central love of their lives? Would they not risk being rejected by those who warmly support them but desire much less reciprocity? Entering into intimacy and giving signs that they deem appropriate, but then curtailing and holding these back because of mistrust, can create awkward moments as their ambiguous stance is noticed: 'You do not trust that I will enhance rather than weaken your dedication to ministry'; 'Why do you question whether through friendship you are really ministering to me?'; 'If you want to sever our relationship, I will accept your doing so, but I will not deny that it was a source of spiritual benefit to me'. The awareness of being inconsistent in friendship because of unresolved tension between attraction and suspicion can cause pastoral ministers to ask how they can endure prolonged interior disquiet and still carry out zealous service. Tired by the constant struggle with intimate friendships and disheartened by their possible negative consequences, persons dedicated to ministry may disown the attraction they first felt for another and the grace offered through it. Afterwards they may discover that the same alarming pattern of fascination and withdrawal occurs in the new relationships they form.<sup>8</sup>

Having personally discerned that spontaneous affection is to be trusted, St Bernard of Clairvaux describes the exchange of human warmth as a reciprocal provision of a divinely willed resting place for the other and as a mutual sharing in the untiring love of the Holy Spirit:

While I write this letter you are present to me, as I am sure I shall be present to you when you read it. We weary ourselves out scribbling to each other, but is the Spirit ever weary of loving? We find rest with those we love and provide a resting place-in ourselves for those who love us.<sup>9</sup>

At first, contemporary pastoral ministers, torn between attraction to some and dedication to all, might regard the desire to be present to friends, to be constant in expressing love for them, and to be concerned with their consolation as hindrances to the selflessness indispensable to their service of many. With time they might realize, however, that apostolic dedication, much like interaction with friends, necessarily entails allowing others to be part of them, to love them in return and to give them repose, lest ministry become impersonal, unilateral and burdensome. When the Holy Spirit, acting in persons committed to ministry, overcomes their

mistrust of close friends, he illumines the connection between intimacy and apostolicity which Jesus made the hallmark of his ministry. He first summoned the Twelve to be with him (Mk 3, 14), for they were to be sent to communicate to others not only his message but also his presence, affection and peace. Jesus understood himself as a resting place for humanity (Mt 11, 28), while he knew that intimate friends who would keep vigil with him (Mt 26, 39-46) could be trusted to support his self-gift to the Father on behalf of all people. Trusting their yearning for intimacy with their friends, pastoral ministers can also repudiate the deceptive value of independence from those they serve, and practise the interdependence of Jesus with those to whom he gave and from whom he received warm companionship.<sup>10</sup>

*Honesty: to hide from or share vulnerability with the friend?*

Having attained a degree of trust in giving and receiving intimacy, persons involved in ministry embark on a further stage of asceticism of feeling-integration as they are challenged to articulate their deepest motives, reactions and fears to their friends. This is not an easy step for those accustomed to relating to others in formal ministerial settings; thus the call to be honest and to relinquish unilateral direction of the friendship can be humiliating: 'You are controlling our relationship very carefully, but you never explain why'; 'Just tell me what you honestly feel and do not worry about how I will react; leave that to me'; 'I reveal openly my suffering on account of you, but you seldom talk of your pain on account of me'. Although pastoral ministers know that Jesus considered his disciples friends because he made known to them all that he heard from the Father (Jn 15, 15), it is often difficult for them to tell friends what they hear God saying regarding his activity in them through friendship. Later they might realize that they had never brought their friends to prayer at all for, once having learned that mutual honesty usually propels the partners in a friendship towards greater rather than less peace, pastoral ministers become more conscious that friendship necessitates intense prayer, and that friends should be told some of the insights about the relationship that prayer generates. Until this stage of honesty is reached, those engaged in ministry must be patient with the tendency to hide their vulnerability and thereby limit the depth of their friendships.<sup>11</sup> However, if they do not eventually share their weakness and fear, anger and disappointment with their friends, they might neither experience the power of Christ at work in their woundedness (2 Cor 12, 11), nor sense that one way in which the power of Christ heals them is by sending people who

bear their burdens and give them hope (Lk 24, 17-19). Such honesty about their vulnerability is a form of dying to self-love, and marks the crucial stage in the asceticism of feeling-integration; once it is passed, new horizons in the friendships of pastoral ministers open; but as long as this 'exodus' is avoided, they persist in distrusting intimacy and in doubting the graced nature and consoling power of their friendships.

Another medieval proponent of human love as an access to union with God, Aelred of Rievaulx, claimed that friends had to be chosen carefully because each of them is invariably to become another self worthy of knowing and loving all that occurs within their friend: 'For sure your friend is the companion of your soul, to whose spirit you join and attach yours and so associate yourself, that you wish to become one instead of two, since he is one to whom you entrust yourself as another self, from whom you hide nothing, from whom you fear nothing'.<sup>12</sup> Pastoral ministers who were taught the asceticism of feeling-denial might for years have great difficulty in accepting another as a 'companion of their soul', and even rebel vehemently against the desire to become 'one instead of two' with another. Aelred is quite correct in asserting that the decision of 'entrusting oneself as to another self' and 'hiding nothing' is the dividing line between a superficial and a spiritual relationship. For example, only when bewildered pastoral ministers are free enough to say to another 'I am afraid of and angry about our friendship, because I am so dependent on you, yearn for you, find our separation unbearable and my ministry more painful' can they understand how Christ's passion began not with public humiliation or physical torture but with loving his friends to the end and being saddened when taken from them (Jn 13, 21). Then pastoral ministers can also say, as Paul did to the Philippians, 'I hold you in my heart . . . and I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus' (Phil 1, 7-8). Once the greatest vulnerability—that caused by two souls attached and associated by love of Christ—comes to expression, the passage between the inchoate and the mature phases of christian friendship is crossed. The signs of this transition are peace, zeal and prayer. Pastoral ministers find that their roving affectivity is finally centred on another, while paradoxically their apostolic fervour is increased and their meditation transformed from an imposed requirement to a spontaneous activity.<sup>13</sup> At this point they can marvel that by the prompting of the Holy Spirit they have been brought from fearful isolation to calm fellowship, so that in conjunction with Christ their zeal for the kingdom manifests itself in greater service, and culminates in mystical union with the Father.

*Communion: to go away from or stay with the friend forever?*

At the start of the advanced phases of friendship the spiritual discernment of pastoral ministers and those they love takes on a new character, since finding God's will for them is now a more communal than individualistic process. Shared honesty about the vulnerability of being in love leads them directly to questions concerning the external symbols of commitment which will embody and deepen the spiritual mutuality between them. Apart from giving and receiving the erotic pleasure inappropriate for pastoral ministers, some natural and joyful, free and consoling tactile expressions which normally are exchanged by close friends occur between them.<sup>14</sup> If with time these external signs either have lost their sacramentality by becoming uncontrolled or seem to be on the verge of doing so, pastoral ministers frequently feel constrained to terminate the friendship abruptly. Yet, this pressure should be carefully examined, since now the desire for even fuller communion with their friends affords them occasions to observe concretely rather than theoretically the gospel values of forgiveness and conversion, compassion and non-violence. Moreover, faithful dedication to communion with friends can illumine the positive aspect of evangelical celibacy by challenging those ministers who have opted for it to symbolize in an unmistakable manner the mystical and eschatological nature of all christian love. For, once the asceticism of feeling-integration has induced pastoral ministers to abide permanently in friendships, the concomitant yearning for increased spiritual union with others can instil a sense of peace and hope: 'We show such respect for each other that our former compulsions have passed away and our unlimited freedom has begun'; 'We no longer fear the end of our friendship, because for eternity where the one is the other will be'; 'Our commitment teaches us what it means that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ'.

In one of the most moving passages in patristic literature, St Augustine confidently states that the beatific vision itself will not quench the desire for friends:

Nebridius now rests in Abraham's bosom. Whatever may be meant by this, there dwells my own Nebridius, my dear friend. There he lives on. What other place could exist for a soul like his? He no longer waits for words from my lips, but his own lips stoop to heavenly springs, to unending bliss. Yet I do not believe that this will satiate him to the point of forgetting me, since you, Lord, at whose source he drinks, are mindful of us all.<sup>15</sup>

The spiritual communion with friends, to which the asceticism of



feeling-integration leads persons dedicated to ministry, entails giving and receiving glances, words and gestures, and knowing that these have an enduring quality. Until these actions are viewed as such, they might seem self-indulgent rather than self-abnegating. Yet growth in the free exchange of appropriate signs of commitment is death to an abstract assent to love of God and neighbour and birth to a vital experience of divine love through love of others.<sup>16</sup> Such integrated and committed love can also lead pastoral ministers to pass from the purgative and illuminative to the unitive way of asceticism and mysticism. The more general pointer to heightened union with God is that their behaviour more consistently manifests the fruits of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5, 22–23). The more particular indication that the unitive way has begun is ever more altruistic desire on the part of pastoral ministers that their friends, through graced encounters with them, anticipate in this world the perduring bestowal of the Spirit's gifts. When those engaged in ministry ask friends to love them forever, and are asked the same by them, they may tremble at the audacity of the request but be consoled over the prospect that a common 'Yes' will not be abrogated for eternity.

*Service: does empathy for the friend bind or free?*

The words 'It was necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory' (Lk 24, 26) become more lucid for pastoral ministers desirous of eternal glory in communion with their friends, for in the concrete circumstances it is imperative to assume the substantial cost of bearing their pain. When this empathetic phase of the asceticism of feeling-integration is reached, persons involved in ministry might at first sense relief, since their original vocation to serve all and their subsequent call to friendship with some no longer seem incompatible; instead, the two appear to coincide, since christian friendship is itself a heightened form of diaconia.<sup>17</sup> As consoling as this insight might be, however, the emotional suffering which friendship persistently requires could so preoccupy pastoral ministers that they might seem more locked into the narrow existential concerns of love than oriented to the broader sociological issues of justice. If this worry is not alleviated, concern for the physical and spiritual well-being of friends might be viewed by those dedicated to ministry as self-service to be vigorously checked lest it distract them from the pastoral ideal of serving those for whom empathy is obviously more urgent.<sup>18</sup> Only the reactions of their friends to their compassion can clarify this difficult stage of discernment: 'That we are willing to suffer for

each other is the most convincing call to live the beatitudes'; 'Our oneness has broken down our egoism, for the pain we endure involves us in the passion of Christ taking place in the world'; 'Our mutual compassion renders us credible to suffering people, and allows Christ to console us through them'. Faced with the discernment which empathy for friends elicits, pastoral ministers might glimpse another proof of the authentic christian character of the asceticism of feeling-integration: it ultimately frees them to be bound emotionally, and not merely intellectually and spiritually, to Christ suffering in another.

St Ignatius Loyola regarded it as self-evident that, only if one had learned to empathize with the suffering of friends, would it be possible to embrace the pain involved in apostolic identification with Christ. Thus Ignatius urged Christians, motivated by love for their divine friend, to share willingly in all that Christ endures:

It is my wish and desire, and my deliberate choice, provided only that it be for your greater service and praise, to imitate you in bearing all injuries, all evils and all poverty both physical and spiritual, if your most sacred Majesty should will to choose me for such a life and state.<sup>19</sup>

As pastoral ministers enter explicitly into the empathetic phase of love, the Christ-like grief of not being able to alleviate all the hardships of friends but of having to join themselves to these and be free to carry them demonstrates that committed friendship can be considered no longer a luxury but a necessity of apostolic service. When persons engaged in ministry recognize the righteous urgings of the Spirit in their friends and in themselves, they are exposed, as is the Christ, to the sharp winds of social anguish rather than being hidden in the safe corner of indifferent tranquillity.

*Joy: is blessedness with the friend complacency or zeal?*

Although friendship brings the suffering of the world into focus, it also serves to foreshadow the glory of humanity in God's kingdom. When pastoral ministers have progressed with their friends through the stages already delineated, they begin reciprocally to communicate joy. Now that pain and peace can be seen to have accompanied each step toward spiritual friendship, pastoral ministers and their friends can comprehend that the paschal mystery of Christ—his descent into darkness, humiliation and suffering and his ascent into light, blessedness and wholeness—has sanctified their entire path from the beginning. However, having accepted the grace of friendship as a benefit of Christ's own passover to new

life, pastoral ministers are not exempt from further discernment, for the tension between complacency in each other and service of many others is reflected in their conversations: 'We are much less on our guard, but perceive the hopelessness of others and want to make our joy in Christ theirs'; 'Before we were friends, we were motivated more by fear than by hope, but now we are freer and calmer in all our relationships'; 'The consolation we experience urges us to speak and act as heralds of the risen Christ'. Such statements are both reassuring and disturbing, since they raise the issue whether friendship promotes more contentment than it does zeal. Far from being neurotic, this suspicion arises from the 'being restlessly at rest' which marks christian existence between Pentecost and the Parousia.<sup>20</sup> Does the joy of spiritual friendship nourish the restlessness as well as the restfulness of pastoral ministers? Is it as mystical and prophetic as it is consoling and serene?

These questions, like those which preceded them at each stage on the way to mature friendship, are best answered by bringing old and new wisdom to bear. Aelred of Rievaulx understood the consolation of friendship as the stimulus to a repeated ascent from human to divine, and descent from divine to human love:

Is it not a foretaste of blessedness thus to love and thus to be loved; thus to help and thus to be helped; and in this way from the sweetness of fraternal charity to wing one's flight aloft to that more sublime splendour of divine love, and by the ladder of charity now to mount to the embrace of Christ himself; and again to descend to the love of neighbour, there pleasantly to rest?<sup>21</sup>

This passage captures the mystical dynamism inherent in the joy of christian friendship. This joy, while chiefly characterized by rest, is a gift of the Father who directs friends to undertake a contemplative journey into the arms of Christ, so as on returning to practise love once again in the power of the Holy Spirit. Aelred's predominantly 'descending' theological vision could be said to accent the restfulness of the friendships which pastoral ministers enjoy, since this enjoyment results from the originative trinitarian movement 'Father—Son—Spirit'. In a complementary fashion the bishops of Vatican II, reflecting modern concern for the future of matter and history, emphasized the prophetic dynamism of pastoral love which is inspired by the eucharistic doxology: 'Pastors gather together God's family as a brotherhood all of one mind, and lead them in the Spirit, through Christ, to God the Father'.<sup>22</sup> Here the 'ascending' theological vision could be said to accent the restlessness of the joy of christian friendship. This joy, while also restful, is

given by the Holy Spirit to encourage humanity's participation in the eschatological trinitarian movement 'Spirit—Son—Father', whose aim is to draw all things towards the kingdom.

These dynamic trinitarian movements—the one originative and the other eschatological—comprise the traditional and contemporary theological horizon against which formation directors can confidently place their claim that the asceticism of friendship is able to orient pastoral ministers to mystical prayer and prophetic action. Nevertheless, this essay, which has greatly syncopated and neatly schematized the stages of friendship encountered by pastoral ministers, might induce some to ask whether the asceticism of feeling-integration should or even can be taught at all. Would not a facile portrayal of complex emotional experiences incite those training for ministry to search for friends too eagerly, or to think that they are already arriving with their friends at the mystical union with God's being and at the prophetic share in his mission which are attainable only after years in pastoral service? Since these dangers are no doubt real, prudence should temper the idealism and enthusiasm with which the asceticism of feeling-integration is advocated during formation for ministry. Yet, once the need for caution has been seriously considered, it is undeniable that future pastoral ministers, aware at least in theory of what pain and consolation lie ahead of them as they advance in love for particular persons, might be better prepared to discern with rather than evade them, share themselves with rather than withdraw from them, and be vulnerable rather than dishonest before them. In this way those dedicated to ministry might enter into a graced *kenosis* with their friends, that is, into a communion of suffering and joy which reflects and participates in the self-emptying being and mission of the triune God.<sup>23</sup> In the end, the asceticism of feeling-integration cannot so much be taught as indicated, since it is a formation process which does not cease until death, and which is never complete until entrance into the unoriginate and unending friendship of the Spirit, the Son and the Father.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Vatican II, *Decree on the ministry and life of priests*, 14. Even though the phrase 'pastoral love' explicitly describes the spirituality of ordained ministers, it aptly expresses the spiritual ideal of non-ordained Christians who perform pastoral services. In this essay the term 'pastoral minister' is meant to include both ordained and non-ordained ecclesial leaders.

<sup>2</sup> For a fuller treatment of this topic, cf Teresita Scully, 'Discernment of friendships' in *Human development* 6 (1985) pp 12–15.

<sup>3</sup> Cf Christopher Kiesling, *Celibacy, prayer and friendship*, (New York, 1978).

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed analysis of this experience, cf James Gill and Linda Amadeo, 'Celibate anxiety', in *Human development* 1 (1980), pp 6-17. <sup>5</sup> St Augustine, *Confessions* IV, 6.

<sup>6</sup> St Augustine, *Letter* 130, 2, 4, as quoted in Marie A. McNamara, *Friends and friendship for St Augustine*, (New York, 1964), p 235.

<sup>7</sup> Cf Matthias Neuman, 'Friendships between men and women in religious life' in *Sisters today* 46, (1974), pp 81-93.

<sup>8</sup> Although in this article the generic term 'feeling-denial' is used, psychologists distinguish between repression, suppression and sublimation of emotion; cf William Kraft, 'Celibate genitality' in *Celibate loving*, ed. by Mary A. Huddleston, (New York, 1984), pp 69-90.

<sup>9</sup> Bruno S. James (ed.), *The letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux*, letter 90 (Chicago, 1953).

<sup>10</sup> Cf Jean Leclercq, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the cistercian spirit*, (Kalamazoo, 1974), pp 78-84 in which the author links Bernard's devotion to an imitation of Christ to the sacraments of baptism and eucharist. Interdependence between friends is thus a specific form of the intimate union which the sacraments create between Christ the head and his members, and among the members themselves.

<sup>11</sup> The english Cistercian, Aelred of Rievaulx, distinguished four stages by which one climbs to the perfection of friendship: selection, probation, admission and perfect harmony, cf *Spiritual friendship*, trans. by Mary Laker, (Washington, 1974), (3, 7) p 93. What is described in this essay as 'honesty' corresponds to 'admission', just as 'attraction' corresponds to 'selection', 'trust' to 'probation' and 'communion' to 'perfect harmony'.

<sup>12</sup> Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual friendship*, (3, 6), p 93.

<sup>13</sup> Cf George Aschenbrenner, 'A celibate's relationship with God' in *Human development* 5 (1984) pp 38-43; Teresa M. Boersig, 'The seven mansions: prayer and relationship' in *Review for religious* 40 (1981) pp 84-89.

<sup>14</sup> Cf Philip K. Keane, 'Sexuality and celibacy' in *Sexual morality: a catholic perspective*, (New York, 1977), pp 149-170. <sup>15</sup> St Augustine, *Confessions*, IX, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Cf Douglas Roby, 'Introduction' to Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual friendship*, pp 17-18 in which he discusses Aelred's formula 'God is friendship' (1, 69) p 65, and his phrase 'he who abides in friendship abides in God and God in him' (1, 70) p 66.

<sup>17</sup> For St Bernard's understanding of *caritas* as passing through the fear of loss of God and self-concern for gaining God, so as to arrive at selfless love for God through service of others, cf, G. Smerillo, 'Caritas in the initial letters of St Bernard' in *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux: studies commemorating the eighth centenary of his canonization*, ed. by M. Basil Pennington, (Kalamazoo, 1977), pp 118-136.

<sup>18</sup> For a description of the theological tension between the Church as a haven of spiritual communion in a de-personalized world and as a catalyst to hopeful social change, a tension which is reflected in the friendships of church ministers, cf Jürgen Moltmann, *Hope and planning*, (London, 1971), pp 129-151.

<sup>19</sup> St Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, trans. by Anthony Mottola, (New York, 1964), p 68. a parallel can be drawn between the phases of friendship and the dynamism of the Spiritual Exercises: 'The Principle and Foundation' can be correlated to the stages of attraction and trust, 'The First Week' to that of honesty, 'The Second Week' to communion, and 'The Third Week' and 'The Fourth Week' to those of service and joy respectively.

<sup>20</sup> Karl Barth often underlined this tension, since God is the one from whom all restfully proceeds and to whom all restlessly returns. Cf *Church dogmatics* III/3, ed. by G. Bromiley and T. Torrance, (Edinburgh, 1960), p 430.

<sup>21</sup> Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual friendship* (3, 127), p 129.

<sup>22</sup> *Dogmatic constitution on the Church*, 28; cf also *Decree on the ministry and life of priests*, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Cf Jürgen Moltmann, *Trinity and kingdom: the doctrine of God*, (London, 1981), pp 105-128; Jean Leclercq, *op. cit.*, p 79 where it is asserted that for St Bernard 'the aim of the incarnation was to reveal the Father and communicate the Spirit, but also to show men the way by which they can return to the Father in the Spirit.