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A Particle of Amazement Which Will Become the Essence of Eternity. The Meaning of Friendship in the Life and Thought of Saint John Paul II

Summary

Friendships with the most various kinds of people played an important role in the life of Saint John Paul II. In his reflections on friendship, the pope elaborates Thomistic categories from his personalist perspective. According to Pope Wojtyła, friendship is a specific form of chaste love. Among the friends, it works out a deep union that is an image of the triune God and an anticipation of the everlasting communion of the saints.

Keywords: love, chastity, Aquinas, *communio personarum*

Streszczenie

Cząstka zdumienia, która stanie się esencją wieczności. Znaczenie przyjaźni w życiu i myśli świętego Jana Pawła II

Przyjaźnie z ludźmi odegrały ważną rolę w życiu świętego Jana Pawła II. W swoich rozważaniach na temat przyjaźni papież opracowuje kategorie tomistyczne z perspektywy personalizmu. Według papieża Wojtyły przyjaźń jest swoistą formą czystej miłości. Wśród przyjaciół rozwija się głęboka jedność, która jest obrazem Trójjedynego Boga i antycypacją wiecznej komunii świętych.

Słowa kluczowe: miłość, czystość, Akwinata, *communio personarum*

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Before being a priest, a bishop and a pope of unique stature; before being a scholar, a poet and a contemplative soul with a peculiar impact on the international stage, Karol Wojtyła was a loving and beloved friend to many people around him. The “boy with a friendly character”² developed long lasting friendships with very diverse people:³ men and women; workers, intellectuals and artists;⁴ Jews and Christians alike.⁵ Moreover, his intense relations with families also provided a rich base of evidence for his magisterium:⁶ in a letter, dated December

² S. Oder, S. Gaeta, *Darum ist er heilig. Der wahre Johannes Paul II.*, Kißlegg 2014, p. 21. Referring to the celebrations of Christmas at the papal apartments in the Apostolic Palace, Sławomir Oder relates John Paul II’s predilection for companionship with people with whom he maintained deep and strong bonds to the fact that in this way, he could experience the warmth of a family, that he had been partly deprived of by the untimely death of his relatives: S. Oder, S. Gaeta, *Darum ist er heilig*, op. cit., p. 75–76. On the importance of these Christmas celebrations for the continuance of the friendship, see also W. Póltawska, *Journal d’une amitié. La famille Póltawski et Karol Wojtyła. Avec quarante-six lettres inédites de Jean-Paul II*, Paris 2011, p. 409.

³ Cf. W. Redzioch, *Accanto a Giovanni Paolo II. Gli amici e i collaboratori raccontano*, Milano 2014.

⁴ On Jan Tyranowski, who introduced young Karol Wojtyła in the “Living Rosary” groups and in the Carmelite spirituality (esp. saint John of the Cross), and on Mieczysław Kotlarczyk, Juliusz Kydryński, Danuta Michałowska and the other members of the Rhapsodic Theater, see G. Weigel, *Witness to Hope. The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, New York 2001, p. 58–66. Wojtyła’s personal remembrances of Jan Tyranowski, Jerzy Ciesielski, and his article on the two friends: the Carmelite priest Fr. Rafał (Józef) Kalinowski and Brother Albert (Adam Chmielowski) are collected in: K. Wojtyła, *I miei amici*, Roma 1990. Fascinating examples of human closeness are collected in: J. Evert, *Saint John Paul the Great. His Five Loves*, Lakewood 2014; cf. H. de Lubac, *Mémoire sur l’occasion de mes écrits*, Namur 1989, p. 173–176.

⁵ See for instance J. Kluger, G. di Simone, *The Pope and I. How the Lifelong Friendship between a Polish Jew and John Paul II Advanced Jewish-Christian Relations*, Maryknoll 2012; G.F. Svidercoschi, *Brief an einen jüdischen Freund. Karol Wojtyla und Jerzy Kluger*, Graz 1993.

⁶ For the significance of his so called *Środowisko*, a group of families that started in 1948 during his chaplainship at St. Florian’s in Cracow, see G. Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, op. cit., p. 98–108 (and *passim* on the pope’s many friendships); cf. also S. Dziwisz, *Una vita con Karol*, Milano 2007, p. 21; *With Saint John Paul the Great in Poland. A Pilgrim’s companion*, ed. M. de Montserrat Vega, Roma 2016, p. 70, 129. A meeting with three generations *Środowisko* at Castel Gandolfo in 2005 is sympathetically described in: G. Weigel, *The End and the*

24th, 1978 to Wanda Póltawska, a psychiatrist and his lifelong friend (caressingly called *Dusia*, ‘little sister’) whose miraculous healing bishop Wojtyła had obtained at the intercession of Padre Pio⁷, the newly elected pope wrote that “she was and remained his personal expert for *Humanæ Vitæ*”.⁸

1. Traditional semantics with a new scope

In his metaphysical analysis of the phenomenon of love, the pope generally draws on mediaeval scholastic distinctions and terminology. What Pope Wojtyła calls *attraction* corresponds with *amor complacentiae* (LaR, 74 ff.), *desire* with *amor concupiscentiae*,⁹ *goodwill* is comparable with *amor benevolentiae* (LaR, 83; 90) and *friendship* with *amor amicitiae*.¹⁰ Friendship (and betrothed love) differ from the other forms of love in the distinctive aspect of the “union of

Beginning. Pope John Paul II – The Victory of Freedom, the Last Years, the Legacy, New York 2010, p. 373–374.

⁷ Wojtyła had contacted Padre Pio of Pietrelcina during his stay in Italy for the Second Vatican Council. See the letters in: W. Póltawska, *Journal d’une amitié*, op. cit., p. 85–86 (cf. W. Póltawska, *Journal d’une amitié*, op. cit., p. 294–295, p. 410).

⁸ Cf. W. Póltawska, *Journal d’une amitié*, op. cit., p. 420 (p. 419–420). In this regard, Póltawska remarked that true friendships forever lasts, and that after his election as pope nothing changed in their relationship (cf. W. Redzioch, *Accanto a Giovanni Paolo II*, p. 92).

⁹ *Amor concupiscentiae* is “love towards the good that man wishes to another” (STh I–II,26,4 co). *Amor concupiscentiae* is not to be identified with concupiscence: K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, San Francisco 1993 (hereinafter: LaR), 81. On the parallelism of the binoms *amor concupiscentiae* – *amor benevolentiae* and *eros* – *agapè* in: Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* 7, and its origins in Thomism and in the speculations of ps.-Dionysius Areopagita, see: A. Prieto, *Eros and Agape*, in: *The Way of Love. Reflections on Pope Benedict XVI’s Encyclical “Deus Caritas Est”*, ed. L. Melina, C.A. Anderson, San Francisco 2006, p. 219–220.

¹⁰ *Amor amicitiae* is “love towards him to whom man wishes good” (STh I–II,26,4 co). Pope Wojtyła draws on Thomistic philosophy but interchangeably uses concepts as *amor amicitiae* and *amicitia*, although they have to be differentiated in Thomism (cf. *amor amicitiae* in I–II,26,4 vs. *amicitia* in II–II,23,1); see M. Kauth, *Charity as Divine and Human Friendship*, Charlotte 2014.

wills (*unum velle*¹¹) by virtue of which two ‘I’s become a single ‘we’” (LaR, 94).¹²

A similar imagery of the two ‘I’s is present in one of the scarce paragraphs in the *Theology of the Body*, in which the topic of friendship is mentioned:

*The term ‘friend’ indicates what is always essential for love, which puts the second ‘I’ beside one’s own ‘I’. ‘Friendship’ – the love of friendship (amor amicitiae) – signifies in the Song a particular approach of the bride’s feminine ‘I,’ a mutual approach felt and experienced as an interiorly unifying power.*¹³

The aspect mentioned of the reciprocity of love and the mutual recognition thereof is a distinct element in the definition of friendship since Aristotle.¹⁴ The Stagyrte’s *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII–IX are largely used by Saint Thomas in his digressions on *amicitia* and *amor amicitiae*. By do-

¹¹ Pope John Paul II alludes here to the classical saying: *idem velle atque idem nolle, ea demum firma amicitia est*, cf. Sallustius, *De con. Catilinae* 20, 4, see also the variations in Cicero, Seneca, Ambrose, Jerome, Rufin, Augustin, e.a., in: A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer*, Leipzig 1890, p. 19 and the additions from mediaeval Latin, in: M.C. Sutphen, *A Further Collection of Latin Proverbs*, in: *The American Journal of Philology* 22 (1901), p. 7. Saint Thomas Aquinas refers to the dictum in: *STh II-II,29,3 co.*, referring to Cicero and Aristotle, *EN IX*. To Aelred, *De spirituali amicitia*, III, 124–125, see N. Lefler, *Theologizing Friendship. How Amicitia in the Thought of Aelred and Aquinas Inscriptures the Scholastic Turn*, Eugene 2014, p. 86. The Latin words, that the pope quotes, show resemblances with the proverb in its reformulation into a prayer in: Thomas a Kempis, *De imitatione Christi* 3,15,3 (*Sit mihi unum velle, et unum nolle tecum*).

¹² “It is in friendship that such unity is found”: *Lc*.

¹³ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*. Translation, Introduction, and Index by Michael Waldstein, Boston 2006 (hereinafter: *ToB*), 562 (§ 109,4), referring to Song 4:7,9–10 and quoted according to the original text, which slightly varies from the version in *Insegnamenti* 7.1 (1984), p. 1560–1614; cf. *ToB*, p. 563.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII,2 (on the ἀντιφιλήσις οὐ λαμβάνουσα: 1155b17 ff.); cf.: S. Benetatos, *Aristotle’s Notion of Friendship*, in: *Thinking about Friendship. Historical and Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. D. Caluori, Basingstoke 2012, p. 11–29. Pope John Paul II refers to *EN VIII–IX* in: *LaR*, 86, following Aristotle in his distinction of different kinds of reciprocity. On the Aristotelian text, see also Y. Semen, *Le mariage selon Jean-Paul II*, Paris 2015, who in his chapter on friendship defines this relationship as “amour de mutuelle bienveillance”, referring to *EN VIII,2* (1155b34) and S. Grygiel, *Discovering the Human Person. In Conversation with John Paul II*, Grand Rapids 2014, p. 127 on friendship in Aristotle as “one of the most indispensable requirements of life” (*EN* 1155a).

ing so, Aquinas attested that the aspect of reciprocity is one of the main characteristics of friendship in the christian tradition too.¹⁵ The pope's phenomenological analysis of the mystery of friendship and love is rooted in this Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition,¹⁶ although other influences on his personalistic Thomism are not be excluded.¹⁷

2. Building a communion in chaste love

Father Wojtyła's theatrical play *Radiation of Fatherhood* (1964), originally conceived as a complement to *The Jeweller's Shop* (1960), starts with an analysis of isolation (Part I.2), in which the protagonist, Adam, expresses his desire to belong exclusively to God, thus resigning from all human bonds ("What will make me more like Him, that is to say, independent of everything? Ah, to stand apart from everything, so that I could be only within myself! I should then be closest to You"). Nevertheless, the yearning for a loneliness of this kind is decidedly rejected in the text as an illusion and a false choice.¹⁸ Obviously,

¹⁵ Saint Francis of Sales mentions mutual affection, awareness thereof, and reciprocal communication as the constitutive factors that distinguish friendship from the other forms of love, see: François de Sales, *Introduction à la vie dévote*, III,17 (*De l'amitié*), in: François de Sales, *Œuvres (Pléiade)*, Paris 1969, p. 178. Pope Wojtyła quotes St. Francis' definition of charity ("Charity is a love of friendship, a friendship of preference, a preferential love", cf. *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, II,22) in his *Letter on the Fourth Centenary of the Episcopal Ordination of St. Francis de Sales* (23.11.2002). St. Francis' designation of charity as friendship ("cette amitié est une vraie amitié, car elle est réciproque", *L.c.*, in: François de Sales, *Œuvres*, p. 476) is strongly influenced by saint Thomas Aquinas.

¹⁶ See J. Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty. The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II*, Washington DC 2000, p. 64 ff.; cf. Y. Semen, *L'Imago Dei chez Thomas d'Aquin et Jean-Paul II: contradiction ou prolongement?*, in: *Cahiers de l'IPC* 83 (2016), p. 63–85. Similarly, the pope also follows Boethius in his famous definition of the human person, reinterpreting it according to his personalist approach, cf. *LaR* 22–23.

¹⁷ On the influence of the so called Carmelite personalism (esp. saint John of the Cross, but also saint Teresa of Ávila) on the philosophical method of the later Pope John Paul II, see the informative introduction from Michael Waldstein in: John Paul II, *Man and Woman*, p. 23–34; cf. R. Buttiglione, *La pensée de Karol Wojtyła*, Paris 1984, p. 70–82.

¹⁸ See the comments on this text by Z. Zarębianka, *Maturing for Death and for Fatherhood in the Poetic Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła*, in: *The Space of the Word. The Literary Activity of Karol Wojtyła - John Paul II*, eds. Z. Zarębianka, J. Machniak Cracow 2011, p. 338–339. *Mutatis mutandis*, the temptation that is presented here resembles the objection that is refuted

man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.¹⁹

In other words: “man has an inborn need of betrothed love, a need to give himself to another” (*LaR*, 253).

In the analysis of the mystery of love that he presents in *Love and Responsibility*, Fr. Wojtyła reserves a particular place for friendship. He discerns the natural forces of attraction and desire, the attitude of goodwill that supposes selflessness, the emotional warmth that is given with sympathy, the common objective interests in comradeship, and finally friendship and betrothed love. The distinctive element in friendship is the fact that the ‘decisive part is played by the will’ (*LaR* 90). Given the fact that acts of the will at the level of the person build the essence of love (*LaR* 49), friendship is, among the deeper human relationships, the genuine way to meet the personalistic norm, which determines that “the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love” (*LaR* 41).

In this respect, friendship contrasts with the previous stages of love, which are rather marked by aspects of self-interest and subjectivity, that go along with emotions. The initial forms of love are not focussed on the human person as such and they lack the dimension of reciprocity, that is given through the union of wills in friendship. Nevertheless, the *amores complacentiae*, *concupiscentiae* and *benevolentiae* are not opposed to *amor amicitiae*, but they are the constituents (the ‘raw material’, in the pope’s words) of true love. An integration (“‘within’ the person and ‘between’ persons”: *LaR* 140) is needed of these former stages in the mystery of love in its fullness, not by blocking the desires but by deepening and broadening them in their roots and in their object.

by François de Sales, *Introduction à la vie dévote*, III,19 (*Des vraies amitiés*) (“Plusieurs vous diront peut-être qu’il ne faut avoir aucune sorte de particulière affection et amitié”). The topic of original solitude in *ToB* §§ 5–7 has another scope.

¹⁹ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* (4.03.1979), 10.

Especially where attraction and desire are concerned, concupiscence makes the natural cravings of man to look for enjoyment for its own sake, focusing on often merely physical aspects of the human being.²⁰ The primarily motivation is possessive and has no relation to the ultimate good of the human person as a whole. When free will makes choices, influenced by concupiscence, it surrenders to the isolation and slavery of a hedonism that never ceases because disintegrated pleasures cannot bring ultimate satisfaction to the human being if the person is not engaged as a whole.

The integration of the natural attractions and desires succeeds by going to their roots and reorienting them from that perspective. The clue is given by the Thomistic anthropology, that is at the origin of Pope Wojtyła's theory of love. The deep source of all desires is the human yearning to love and to be loved.²¹ Man's need to give him- or herself to another person and to constitute a union with him or her has profounder origins than the sexual instinct, and is connected above all with the spiritual nature of the human person.²² In this pure form, love is oriented on the good of the other person, whom it desires to esteem in his or her proper value and whom it wants to serve instead of trying to possess.²³ This in-born desire for love, deeper than concupiscence and maturing through

²⁰ Because the pope's treatments of friendship usually are situated in his analysis of married love, the sexual differentiation between the friends often has a significance in the exposition of the topic (cf. *LaR* 73). Nevertheless, the fundamental characteristics of friendship make abstraction of the distinction between the sexes.

²¹ See *LaR* 253. In the background is the Thomistic principle: *amor praecedit desiderium*: *STh* I-II,25,2; cf. *desiderium autem fruitionis alicuius rei ex amore illius rei causatur*: *ScGent*, IV,54,5; to this last text, see L. Melina, *Love, Desire, Action*, in: L. Melina, *The Epiphany of Love. Toward a Theological Understanding of Christian Action*, Grand Rapids 2010, p. 11ff.; cf.: "What desire seeks through action is finally revealed in the love of friendship. It does not only seek its satisfaction, it seeks the person of the other with whom to be united and to whom to give oneself in the memory of the original gift, completely directed toward the realisation of perfect communion" (L. Melina, *The Epiphany of Love*, op.cit., p. 13); cf. also R. Buttiglione, *Pensée*, op. cit., p. 139.

²² "Sicut philosophus dicit in II Rhetoric., amare est velle alicui bonum": *STh* I-II,26,4 co; cf. *ScGent* III,90,6, quoted by the pope when speaking of the content and structure of friendship in *LaR* 90.

²³ On the disinterested gift of the self as the genuine way in which the human person realises itself, see M. Timmermans, *La différence qui enrichit. La différence sexuelle selon Edith*

goodwill and sympathy and the forces of the human spirit (*LaR* 114), leads to the mutual and loving encounter of human persons that happens in friendship and that rescues men and women from their isolation in sin.²⁴

The true and real encounter of human persons, that is the deepest longing of the heart, occurs in friendship. It is realised in chaste love, that is characterised by a continuous struggle to obtain virtue by integrating attractions and desires in the esteem for the whole person according to the objective good as expressed in the moral norms. Conforming to the deepest desire in the human heart is the union that grows in friendship deeper and longer lasting than physical union, because the souls of the friends are engaged.²⁵ Distinguishing tenderness, that is related to compassion and to the emotions, from sensuality, that regards the body as an object of sexual enjoyment (*LaR* 200–208; cf. *ToB* § 129,2–6), Pope John Paul II does not exclude tender manifestations of care and love, because friendship is e.g. also a fundament for marriage. Varying according to culture and temperament, these expressions are the language of the body (see *ToB* §§ 103–123)²⁶ to substantiate the primary spiritual union with respect for both persons engaged, and for their state of life and vocation.²⁷ As such, these manifestations do not build a goal

Stein et Jean-Paul II (Studia Theologica Internationalia 2), Kraków 2019, p. 246–254; cf. *LaR* 128; *Gaudium et Spes* 24.

²⁴ “I simply resisted sensation and the appeal of the senses, for I knew that otherwise I would never really leave my ‘ego’ and reach the other person—but that meant an effort”: K. Wojtyła, *The Jeweler’s Shop* (I. Andrew). From this perspective, chastity that is the core of friendship has a healing power, see also D.J. Billy, *The Healing Role of Friendship in Aelred of Rievaulx’s De spiritali amicitia*, in: *Living the Truth in Love. Pastoral Approaches to Same-Sex Attraction*, eds. J.E. Smith, P. Check, San Francisco 2015, p. 73–87. This goes not without long and continuous efforts, based on the friends’ purpose to purify the own heart for the other’s sake (cf. *LaR*, 183). This struggles are e.g. expressed in: John Paul II/Karol Wojtyła, *In God’s Hands. The Spiritual Diaries 1962–2003*, London 2017 (hereinafter: *IGH*), p. 42, 100 (maybe in relation with Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, a lifelong friend).

²⁵ Cf. *LaR* 103; see also *The Jeweler’s Shop* (I. Choir, 12); W. Półtawska, *Journal d’une amitié*, op. cit., p. 118.

²⁶ See C. Gams, *Die Dimension des Zeichens. Zu Katechesen 103–107*, in: *Amor. Der Leib und seine Sprache*, ed. C. Gams, Heiligenkreuz 2019, p. 218–246.

²⁷ For that reason, and as is also clear in the life of saint John Paul II, it can be easier to have friendships with people who made already the fundamental choices in life,

in themselves,²⁸ albeit that the natural forces of sensuality, through concupiscence, have a 'consumer orientation' (LaR 105) and push in that direction. In the awareness that the union of the souls is a deeper one than the physical union, friends live a chaste and tender love that grows through continence as a constitutive factor. They build their spiritual union (when faithful are concerned) on prayer and sacraments, study, different kinds of communication and common interests and activities.

Not-married friends are not deprived of this deeper union when they renounce from acts that are the proper manifestations of married love, open for procreation, but to the contrary: precisely their continence is an expression of this more profound union that continues growing.²⁹ In this sense, abstinence is a way of enlarging the heart to make room for the friend in his or her vocation. It is an imitation of the Creator, who, in the act of creating, makes room in Himself out of love and respect for the creation in its differentness. Continence is therefore the proper way to grow in creative love and tenderness.³⁰ This is not only true for friends, but also for married couples, because betrothed love as a *communio personarum* in its different manifestations (also the mother-child-relationship, doctor-patient, teacher-pupil: LaR 98; cf. ToB § 9,2 ff.) contains the inner structure of *amor amicitiae* (LaR 129).³¹

as uncertainty in this field is out of the question then and brings no interference. In LaR 117, Fr. Wojtyła stresses that the integration of love can only succeed on the basis of the objective truth. See also W. Póltawska, *Journal d'une amitié*, op. cit., p. 95: "Aimer l'être humain veut dire aimer sa vocation, la sainteté. La mesure de la proximité est l'acceptation de sa vocation. Si tu comprends la vocation de la personne que tu aimes, alors tu t'approches d'elle à travers la réalisation du dessein de Dieu".

²⁸ The pope speaks in this context of 'disinterested tenderness' (LaR 275; cf. ToB § 110,2) and 'loving kindness' (LaR 167 ff.). In this regard, he also stresses that fear of contact is a characteristic of true love (LaR 180).

²⁹ Fundamental in this regard is the awareness that "the union of persons is not the same as sexual union" (LaR 228). This is also the meaning of continence in married life as it is prescribed by Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Humanae Vitæ*; cf. Michael Waldstein in: John Paul II, *Man and Woman*, p. 99–105 on the importance of this document for John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*.

³⁰ See LaR 136 f. on the creative power of the will.

³¹ Relationships as marriage objectively should be based on nothing less than friendship (LaR 92; cf. 126; 138); cf. Semen, *Mariage*, who indicates that friendship is a necessary condition for marriage but not the ultimate one, as marriage is characterised by the mutual

3. A union of indwelling persons

The temptation of isolation, that Fr. Wojtyła describes at the beginning of his *Radiation of Fatherhood*, is a distortion of the vision of the fundamental autonomy and inalienability of the human person, or, in the pope's words: its original virginity.³² The dynamics of (especially betrothed) love make the person, being *alteri incommunicabilis* (LaR 125), to transcend itself in a *communio personarum* that is build upon the reciprocal giving of the inner self and receiving the self-gift of the other person.³³

Mentioning the 'law of *ekstasis*' (LaR 126), the pope alludes to the Thomistic doctrine of the mystery of love and its effects.³⁴ In his expositions on the bond, union (*STh* I-II q. 25 a. 2 ad 2; *ScGent* IV,54,5) and transformation that are operated by love (*Sent* III,27.1.1) and on the mutual indwelling of the friends (*STh* I- II 28,2), Saint Thomas echoes a long tradition of meditation on friendship, going back to Aristotle and the Neoplatonics and received by many christian authors.³⁵ Pope John Paul II

gift of the self of the spouses with openness for procreation; cf. W.E. May, *Love between Man and Woman: The Epitome of Love*, in: L. Melina, C.A. Anderson, *The Way of Love*, pg. 73, referring to *Gaudium et Spes* 49,1; see also R. Buttiglione, *Pensée*, op. cit., p.134 on the ontological substance of love that is fundamentally the same in its different manifestations.

³² "La fondamentale inviolabilità della sua persona (...) la propria personale individualità, indipendenza ed irripetibilità": K. Wojtyła, *Educare ad amare. Scritti su matrimonio e famiglia* (*Sentieri dell'amore* 2), Siena 2014, p. 83.

³³ The reciprocity makes the other person to be desired as co-creator of love instead of as an object of appetite (LaR 86; cf. 139–40 on creativity). On the participation in a *communio personarum* as the antithesis to *Entfremdung*, see: Th.M. Rimmel, *Die Theologie des Leibes von Papst Johannes Paul II. Philosophische und theologische Grundlagen*, Sankt Ottilien 2014, p. 162–164.

³⁴ See *Sent* III,27.1.1 (a commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, 4.12, in: *Patrologia Graeca* 3,709c) and *STh* I-II,28 (union, mutual indwelling, ecstasy); cf. A. Lizotte, *La personne humaine*, Paris 2014, p. 179–190; P.A. Kwasniewski, *The Ecstasy of Love in Aquinas's "Commentary on the Sentences"*, in: *Angelicum* 83 (2006), p. 51–93.

³⁵ See for instance D. Moss, *Friendship. Anselm, theory and the convolution of sense*, in: *Radical Orthodoxy. A New Theology*, eds. J. Milbank, C. Pickstock, G. Ward, London/New York 1999, p. 127–142; cf. Kauth, *Charity*, on the union and mutual indwelling. Also the motif of the mutual interpenetration that enables each soul to live in and by the other and that is created through the spirituality and the 'inwardness' of persons (LaR 131) has Thomistic origins, see *Sent* III,27,1,1,4. The topic of the union of friends has found a particular expression in Michel de Montaigne, *Essais*, I,28 ("En l'amitié de quoi je parle, elles [nos âmes]

regularly refers to the mystery of the unification of persons that friendship brings with it (*LaR* 91; *ToB* 109, 4)³⁶ by virtue of a reciprocal love that is lived in durability and reliability (*LaR* 86–87). Being an effect and reward of chaste love, the union between friends is a participation in the very person of the other (*IGH* 35; cf. *LaR* 125). This kind of spiritual kinship, with a ‘distinct objective existence in the person and between the persons’ (*LaR* 94), can be stronger than the bonds of blood (*LaR* 261; cf. *LaR* 84).

By joining the friends in the common good that they strive for, the force of this love can operate a real transformation. This does not only take effect in the respective persons,³⁷ but it changes also the experience of commonly visited places, as Wanda Póltawska’s indication of the ‘holy places’ in the Beskid mountains (where she returned time and over again to live the presence of her brother the pope, once he moved to the Vatican³⁸) shows.

Póltawska’s meditation – ‘You taught me’, she writes, referring to the pope – about the mystical bond that links the Mount Saint Anne (their favourite spot in the Beskids) with the Vatican Hill and with Mount Golgotha reveals another dimension of the union of friendship: the participation, through the *communio personarum*, of the sister in the

se mêlent et confondent l’une en l’autre, d’un mélange si universel qu’elles effacent et ne retrouvent plus la couture qui les a jointes”); see Daniel Lefèvre, *Montaigne et La Boétie. Deux images de l’amitié*, in: *Imaginaire & Inconscient* 20.2 (2007) p. 15–21.

³⁶ See also *LaR* 38; 87. The topic of the union is frequently recurrent in *The Jeweler’s Shop*, for instance Andrew on his future wife Teresa as his alter ego: “that strange persistence of Teresa in me, the cause of her presence, the assurance of her place in my ‘ego’” (I,1); contrasting with the experience of Anna, who grew away from her husband (II,1; II,2).

³⁷ See *IGH* 32–35: “It seems that charity is always responsible for the union with a person that takes place within that which is good, and the union with that which is good that takes places in a person” (*IGH* 34). On the dimension of objectivity, that is a characteristic of friendship, see also *LaR* 90; 92. Saint Thomas states “amans videatur esse in amato, quasi idem factus amato” (*STh* I-II,28,2 co).

³⁸ See especially the second part (“Les retours”) in: W. Póltawska, *Journal d’une amitié*, op. cit., p. 427–610: “Il savait que j’y reviendrais et il m’a dit: ‘Si tu vas là-bas, tu ne seras jamais seule, j’y serai toujours’” (W. Póltawska, *Journal d’une amitié*, op. cit., p. 427). For the “holy places”, see W. Póltawska, *Journal d’une amitié*, op. cit., p. 405, 432. The topic of the transformation of time and places is also present in the appealing sermon of saint John Chrysostom on friendship: *In Epist. I ad Thessal.* II,2, in: *Patrologia Graeca* 62, 404,5–13.

priesthood of her spiritual brother.³⁹ This bond is the reverse of another *unctim*, that between the Mount Saint Anne and the KZ Ravensbrück, where Póltawska had been a prisoner. The pope saw their friendship as a reparation for the sufferings and inhumanities that she had gone through there.⁴⁰ This bonds express a deep conviction of Pope John Paul II, viz. that the union in friendship can lead to a spiritual substitution. The tragical train accident near Nidzica, in which his friend (the later Cardinal) Marian Jaworski was severely injured, and that occurred during the consistory in which Wojtyła was created a cardinal, was understood by the pope as a vicarious suffering, as was the unexpected stroke that befell his friend, Bishop (later Cardinal) Andrzej Maria Deskur on the symbolical date of October 13th, 1978, shortly before Wojtyła's election to the pontificate. It led the pope to conclude: *Debitor factus sum*.⁴¹

4. Called by a Friend to eternal love

The motif of the indwelling of the friends in one another ultimately has a christological perspective: it is shaped in accordance with the Pauline and Johannine motifs 'to be in Christ' and 'Christ in us'. This is the final goal of true friendship: it introduces to communion with the divine Friend.⁴² The coming of this Friend in the life of a person is a unique experience, that has its foretaste in human friendship.

³⁹ See W. Póltawska, *Journal d'une amitié*, op. cit., p. 537; 563; see also W. Póltawska, *Journal d'une amitié*, op. cit., p. 540 on the sufferings of *soror mea sponsa* when the pope is in the Gemelli hospital.

⁴⁰ See the pope's letter of October 20th, 1978 in: W. Póltawska, *Journal d'une amitié*, op. cit., p. 396; cf. W. Póltawska, *Journal d'une amitié*, op. cit., p. 544.

⁴¹ See IGH 136 (notes from October 1978). The pope picks this same words up from Cardinal Tonini's reflections on priesthood during a retreat (February 17–23, 1991): *Omnibus debitor sum* (W. Póltawska, *Journal d'une amitié*, op. cit., p. 340). Oder, *Darum ist er heilig*, p. 77 calls Deskur the "Simon of Cyrene" of John Paul II's pontificate.

⁴² Experiences of the proximity of God through the person of John Paul II are presented by S. Dziwisz, *Ho vissuto con un santo. Conversazione con Gian Franco Svidercoschi*, Milano 2013, p. 123–124.

He is your Friend.

(...)

– is he out there, or
here in the depth of closed eyes?

There, he is there. Only a tremor here,
only words retrieved from nothingness.
Oh – and a particle still remains
of that amazement which will become the essence
of eternity.⁴³

The self-gift in friendship is an image and likeness of the covenant between God and mankind, in which “God gives Himself to man in such a way that is possible only in friendship” (IGH 101; cf. LaR 245).⁴⁴ The *communio personarum* of the friends thus introduces into the communion of the Divine Persons, whereas the anchorage in God builds the safe haven for all kinds of friendship.

Abiding in the eucharistic bread⁴⁵, the “One Heart, simplest and gentlest of all” gathers “crowds of hearts”⁴⁶ around Him to communicate Himself to and to live in.⁴⁷ As such, the communion of the Church

⁴³ From: *Shores of Silence*, 2, in: K. Wojtyła, *Collected Poems*. Translated by Jerzy Peterkiewicz, London 1982, p. 24–25. The imagery of Christ as a Friend hails from Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa of Ávila, cf. A. Przybylska, *The Mystical Landscape of Karol Wojtyła's Early Poems*, in: Z. Zarębianka, J. Machniak, *Space*, p. 120–121; J. Tebień, *A Kind of Silent Reciprocity*. *Karol Wojtyła's Song of the Hidden God in the Light of the Doctrine of St. John of the Cross*, in: op.cit., p. 139–156.

⁴⁴ For this topic in the mediaeval theology, see R. Egenter, *Gottesfreundschaft. Die Lehre von der Gottesfreundschaft in der Scholastik und Mystik des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts*, Augsburg 1928.

⁴⁵ Cf. the eucharistic metaphors in *Shores of Silence*; see also W. Półtawska, *Journal d'une amitié*, op. cit., p. 57, 575.

⁴⁶ *Song of the inexhaustible sun*, 12, in: K. Wojtyła, *Collected Poems*, op. cit., p. 43. The importance of the heart is also stressed in: K. Wojtyła, *Zeichen des Widerspruchs. Besinnung auf Christus*, Zürich 1979, p. 33: „Wir haben nicht einen großen Weltbaumeister, einen Demiurgen vor uns, sondern wir stehen vor dem großen Herzen“; cf. IGH 51–52 on the *philantropia divina*.

⁴⁷ On the Sanjuanist background of the *Song of the inexhaustible sun*, embedded in the Thomistic theology of friendship (“oportuit haberi quamdam amicitiam ad Deum”: *Sent* III, 27, 2, 2 co.; cf. *ScGent* IV, 54, 5), see J. Machniak, *Discovering God in the Poetry of Karol Wojtyła*, in: Z. Zarębianka, J. Machniak, *Space*, p. 162–163.

is rooted in the mystery of friendship, following Him who has chosen us to be His friends (Jn 15:15).⁴⁸ Through the interaction of the Holy Spirit, human love of friendship is being transformed and a *communio personarum* is integrated the *communio sanctorum*.⁴⁹ From this perspective, the mystery of friendship does not only transcend geographical distances by the mutual indwelling of the friends. The bond of friendship that is rooted in God surpasses the ages to become the heart of eternity.⁵⁰

Conclusion

People inhabit an earth that has two poles. They have no permanent place here. They are all on their way, which leads them from the pole of loneliness to the pole of love.⁵¹

⁴⁸ On Jesus as a friend, see: A. Schmidt, *Jesus der Freund*, Echter 2011. The bonds between bishops, priests and laypeople have to be conceived from this perspective; cf. *IGH* 92, 156, 179, 355–356; *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 42, 44, 46, 50, 60, 65, 82; *Discours aux enfants des écoles primaires* (Montréal, 11 septembre 1984); see also K. Wojtyła, *Aux sources du renouveau. Étude sur la mise en œuvre du concile Vatican II*, Paris 1981, p. 93, 99 on the divine principle of the spiritual community of the Church.

⁴⁹ The history of the Church has the most brilliant examples of holy friendships, not only in the Carmelite school of saint Theresa of Ávila and saint Thérèse of Lisieux, of which saint John Paul II is another illustrious disciple; cf. Marie-Eugène de l'enfant Jésus, *Je veux voir Dieu*, Toulouse 2014, chapter II,7; P. Ahern, *Maurice & Thérèse. The Story of a Love*, New York 2008; C. Pergeaux, *Il primo "fratello" di Thérèse, Maurice-Barthélemy Bellière. L'amicizia con una santa*, Milano 2003. Holy friends also appear in other periods and spiritualities, see (apart from the already mentioned saints) e.g. the examples in K. Treu, *Freundschaft*, in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum VIII*, 418–434; W. Geerlings, *Freundschaft*, in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters IV*, 911–912; G. Vansteenberghe, *Amitié*, in: *Dictionnaire de spiritualité I*, 500–529; and further the monographs by M. Henry-Coüannier, *Saint François de Sales et ses Amitiés*, Paris 1922; François de Sales & Jeanne de Chantal, *Correspondance*, Paris 2016; J.-F. Petit, *Sur Le « Phénomène Amical ». L'expérience de l'amitié chez saint Augustin*, in: *Transversalités* 113 (2010), p. 47–63; G. Puma, *Brigitte de Suède et Alfonso de Jaén*, in: *Arzana*, 13 (2010), p. 329–364; G. Vann, *To Heaven With Diana. A Study of Jordan of Saxony and Diana d'Andalò*, New York 2006. See also *IGH* 228–230.

⁵⁰ W. Póltawska, *Journal d'une amitié*, op. cit., p. 534 (“L'amitié ne disparaît pas avec la mort, l'amitié reste, elle a sa place dans l'éternité”). Indicating “il ne faut se rencontrer que dans la prière” (W. Póltawska, *Journal d'une amitié*, op. cit., p. 159), Póltawska expresses her experience of friendship with John Paul II: “Ce n'est pas la présence physique qui décide de la proximité, mais la proximité spirituelle, la *communio personarum*. Ce qui unit vraiment les hommes est au-delà du temps et de l'espace” (W. Póltawska, *Journal d'une amitié*, op. cit., p. 162).

⁵¹ *Radiation of Fatherhood* III,1 (Mother). On the meaning of father-, mother- and childhood in this text, see Zarebianka, *Maturing*, 337; cf. the conclusion of *The Jeweler's Shop* (III,5).

As a limited being that is created in the image and likeness of the triune God, the human person longs for deep relations with other persons as a starting point for the relationship with God (*LaR* 80). The love of friendship enables man to leave his or her isolation in concupiscence and to arrive to a veritable encounter with other human beings in a *communio personarum*, that opens the heart to receive and answer the love from the Heart of God.⁵² As only the chaste man and the chaste woman are capable of true love (*LaR* 171), the challenge of friendship is to live veritable love as an enlarging of man's existence and as an enrichment and a broadening of the human being (*LaR* 130–131).

The different dimensions of John Paul II's vision on the mystery of friendship are beautifully articulated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, promulgated by the Polish pope.

The virtue of chastity blossoms in friendship. It shows the disciple how to follow and imitate him who has chosen us as his friends (Jn 15:15), who has given himself totally to us and allows us to participate in his divine estate. Chastity is a promise of immortality.

Chastity is expressed notably in friendship with one's neighbor. Whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communion (CCC 2347).

In many contemporary cultures, the treasures of friendship have been fallen into oblivion since the romantic theories of love from the 18th and 19th and the sexual revolution of the 20th century.⁵³ Against this background, friendship is a responsibility and a commission for those who received this precious gift.⁵⁴ Being the bloom of chaste love, friendship is a cornerstone of the 'culture of the person' which is the true core

⁵² According to cardinal Schönborn, saint Thomas' exposition on the communication between man and God through *amicitia* in: *STh* II-II,23,1 builds "the very center of the *Summa*": Ch. Schönborn, *Loving the Church. Spiritual Exercises Preached in the Presence of Pope John Paul II*, San Francisco 1998, p. 167; see the pope's notes of this meditation in: *IGH* 414.

⁵³ Cf. A. Dulles, *Love, the Pope, & C.S. Lewis*, "First Things" 169 (2007), p. 20–24.

⁵⁴ Cf. the moving letter that the pope wrote to Wanda Póltawska on October 20th, 1978 (W. Póltawska, *Journal d'une amitié*, op. cit., p. 396–398) and her awareness of an *electio Dei* (W. Póltawska, *Journal d'une amitié*, op. cit., p. 406, 495); see also *IGH* 101.

of the human civilisation (LaR 167), that christians are called to build in this life as a foretaste of eternity.

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