



THE TWELVE-STEP REVIEW

Fr. Emmerich Vogt, O.P.



Spring 2013

Dear friends,

In this season's issue we focus on the call to friendship as part of the Christian vocation and as an aspect of recovery. If anyone would like, we have a separate pamphlet that can be ordered from the website that spells out more deeply the characteristics of true Christian friendship.

Here are some future missions:

- * Corpus Christi Parish, Portsmouth, NH, March 18-21, 2013.
- * St. Raphael, Glasgow, MT, April 8-12, 2013.

* Holy Family Parish, Seal Beach, CA, May 6-9, 2013.

* Various Parishes in Australia, June 21 through July 21.

* St. Joseph Parish, Sandpoint, ID, September 9-12, 2013.

* Nativity of the BVM Parish, East Dubuque, IL, October 7-10, 2013.

* Our Lady of the Mountain Parish, Ashland, OR, October 14-17, 2013.

* St. Luke Parish, Geneseo, NY, October 21-24, 2013.

* St. Joseph Parish, Baltic, CT, October 28-31, 2013.

* St. Patrick Parish, East Hampton, CT, November 4-7, 2013.

* Our Sorrowful Mother Retreat, Vandalia, IL, November 8-10, 2013.

* St. Croix Parish, Stillwater, MN, November 18-21, 2013.

* Christ the King Parish, Seattle, WA, December 9-11, 2013.

* Saint James Parish, Vancouver, WA, December 16-19, 2013.

Friendship begun in this world will be taken up again, never to be broken off.
Saint Francis de Sales

Friends in Recovery

One amazing aspect of the Christian faith is God's desire for our friendship. In most of the world's religions, man is called to be God's slave. Both divine friendship and human friendship are part of the Christian life.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

We hear of the great friendship between David and Jonathan, for Jonathan had David's true interests at heart, putting David even before himself (cf. 1 Sam 18:1f).

The book of Sirach (6:5-17) tells us:

A faithful friend is a strong defense. He that has found him has found a treasure. Nothing can be compared to a faithful friend, and no weight of gold and silver can countervail the goodness of his fidelity. A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality.

Here the central biblical expression is *faithful* friend. Once there is mutual trust and dependability, friendship has a foundation that

is the most valuable possession in the world. With the faithful friend the sorrows of life can be endured. With the faithful friend we are on the path to God.

This passage from Sirach is counterbalanced by warnings against the fair weather friend, who lets one down when the going gets rough. This concern appears often in the books of the Old Testament: superficiality in apparent friendship. The real friend is revealed not in prosperity but in adversity.

According to the book of Ecclesiasticus (19-25, passim), a trusted friend is one to whom you can open your heart, because of the harmony that exists between the friends:

Be faithful to your friend in his poverty and you can rejoice with him in his prosperity (Ecclesiasticus 22:28). Blessed is he who finds a true friend (25:12). From his face I shall not hide myself, and if evil befall him, I shall support him (19:31).

The Book of Ecclesiasticus assumes that friendship is a foundation of human society and desirable for everyone. The problem is how to maintain friendship, and the solution is fidelity to the friend, come what may, and in union with the friend in God.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The narration in John's Gospel (15:12-17) of Jesus' words at the Last Supper contains a central statement He was remembered as having made on friendship to His apostles:

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing: but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my father, I have made known to you.

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INSPIRATION FROM THE SAINTS



Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat was born in a France torn apart by revolutionary forces hostile to the Church. Her older brother, a priest, was imprisoned for refusing to swear allegiance to the new revolutionary state. Through the intercession of a close friend of the family, he escaped the guillotine. Earlier in his life, while awaiting an appropriate age to become a priest, he decided to home-school Madeleine who, at the age of 10, had a great desire to learn. So he provided his sister with a classical education in Greek, physics, mathematics, and history. This increased her desire for learning, not only for herself but for all women, including the poor and outcast.

After the revolutionary terror had dissipated, there was a great need for Christian education. Madeleine was inspired to fill that need. Through the help of a priest, Fr. Farin (who had founded a group of priest-educators), Madeleine, at the age of twenty-one, started an association of women committed to educating young women. For this endeavor, she surrendered her desire to become a contemplative Carmelite. Soon she was elected as superior by the women, an office she carried out for sixty-five years. Eventually the Congregation of the Sacred Heart (as it became known) expanded throughout Europe and was brought to North America by Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne (born in France and died in Missouri). Madeleine, ever intent on education for women, expressed her philosophy, saying:

How rare it is to find a valiant woman! It is perhaps necessarily so, since Scripture says that they are more precious than pearls and diamonds. Let us however work to train a few. For in this century we must no longer count on men to preserve the faith. The grain of faith that will be saved will hide itself among women. A woman cannot remain neutral in the world. She is set for the fall and resurrection of many. How different are God's thoughts from ours!

Between women and God is often arranged the eternal salvation of husbands and sons. But for this you must be the valiant woman. Strong to uphold purity of life. Strong to keep inviolate the treasure of Faith. Strong in every battle of life. Great-souled in the face of calumny, persecution, and death. And remember, sorrow is the training ground of strong souls.

Madeleine insisted that her teaching Sisters keep up-to-date with contemporary methods of education, and for almost every new school established for those with means, a corresponding "free" school was opened to provide the poorer children with a quality education. Beloved by her daughters and venerated by many, Madeleine Sophie Barat died at the general motherhouse in Paris on May 25, 1865, Ascension Day. In 1879, she was declared venerable and beatified on May 24, 1908. On May 24, 1925, she was canonized by Pope Pius XI. Her tomb is located in the Church of St. Francis Xavier, Paris, France. It was said of her that she thought well of people until forced to do otherwise, and that she loved people through their faults to the core of their best selves.

Below are some quotes attributed to her:

"Give only good example to the children; never correct them when out of humor or impatient. We must win them by an appeal to their piety and to their hearts. Soften your reprimands with kind words; encourage and reward them. That is, in short, our way of educating."

"We don't live with angels; we have to put up with human nature and forgive it."

"Show by charity how to meet a crisis."

"Before making any change take counsel.... Prudence and a wise slowness are necessary in the beginning."

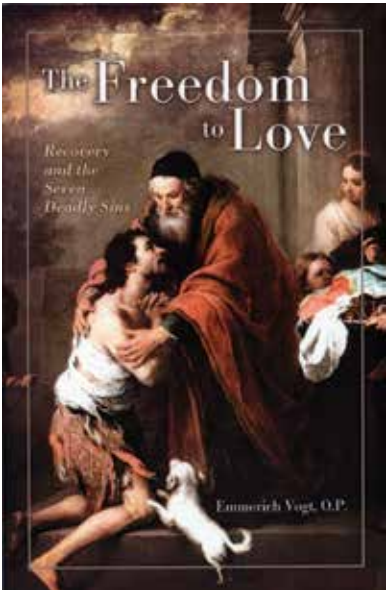
"More is gained by indulgence than by severity."

"Be humble, simple; bring joy to others."

FATHER EMMERICH'S NEW CD SETS

DETACHING WITH LOVE: RENEWED AND UPDATED. The original set was done years ago and Fr. Emmerich has added so much new material that we recently rerecorded it with the updated material in front of a live audience. It is now somewhat longer than the original set and in addition, the talks address what's right and what's wrong with modern psychology. It also gives a Christian understanding of the virtue of love and examines the play of emotions in our lives. Fr. Emmerich presents the principles of the spiritual life, addressing the nature of true detachment, self-righteous behavior, the necessity of self-knowledge, the role of the passions, problems of purity, and the need for appropriate boundaries. In this series we learn to "detach with love." \$35.00.

THE RULE OF OUR WARFARE, a new series given in retreat format at Casa Maria Retreat House, continues where "Detaching with Love" leaves off; i.e., it examines the spirituality of each of the 12 steps from a Catholic perspective, giving examples from Sacred Scripture and the lives of the Saints. After a discussion of the origin of the 12-step spirituality, the conferences focus on the importance of each step and how to live them in the fullness of Catholic life. \$35.00.



Father Emmerich's book, *The Freedom to Love*, explores the need for virtue in the life of the Christian. It examines not only the seven deadly sins, but since virtue is the mean between extremes, it studies the opposite extreme. For example, chastity is a virtue that corrects the sin of lust, but to be chaste doesn't mean a person lacks warm affection. Those who overcome lust but are as cold as ice are disturbed by the opposing extreme, prudishness. The book takes a look at the following capital sins, and their opposing virtues and opposite extremes, all in the context of recovery.

Capital Sin	Opposing Virtue	Opposite Extreme
Pride	Humility	Self-loathing
Envy	Kindness	Pusillanimity
Avarice	Generosity	Wastefulness
Anger	Patience	Servility
Sloth	Diligence	Workaholism
Gluttony	Temperance	Deficiency
Lust	Chastity	Prudishness

If people are serious about having an authentic prayer life in hopes of recovering from the effects of sin in their lives, good understanding of the virtues and their extremes is a necessity. The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. The paradoxical nature of true freedom is highlighted by St. Augustine when he comments on Christ's teaching that to die to oneself is to find oneself. Augustine notes that to part with one's will does not mean we lose freedom; it means we gain freedom in the loss. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to "the slavery of sin" (Romans 6:17; CCC 1733). *The Freedom to Love* explores these issues and shows the path to the freedom that enables a person to love properly.

The Freedom to Love by Fr. Emmerich Vogt, OP; hardcover; 170 pp.; a donation of \$19.99 plus shipping and handling. Also available in e-form online from Barnes and Noble and Amazon.

Order from The Twelve Step Review (see address on back page)

In the New Testament only two people are referred to as just Jesus' friends: Lazarus and Judas. The episode with Lazarus, as with all Jesus' words and deeds, expresses something theologically important about Christian life. Those who are Jesus' true friends are called to a certain death in this life that will lead to a resurrection *in this life*. Thus he who seeks to save his life by running from the Cross of Christ will lose his life, but those who in Christ embrace the Cross will rise from the dead, like Lazarus, in this life. This is our calling as friends of the Lord. He has come that His friends may have life and to the full, but it is a life that comes from a death, as the episode with His *friend* Lazarus signifies. But true friendship is reciprocal, and so we have to respond to Jesus' call to friendship. For His part, God will never cut off the means of our reconciliation. This is shown with Judas. When he comes to betray Jesus, Jesus does not greet him as, "You dirty traitor, may you rot in Hell!" But rather, Jesus addresses Judas as "friend" — He never closes off the possibility of reconciliation and true friendship. This is our model for friendship with others.

EARLY CHRISTIAN TRADITION

An early definition of friendship in Christian tradition is from Gregory the Great (Pope in 590, known throughout the Middle Ages as "The Father of Christian Worship" because of his exceptional efforts in revising the Roman liturgy. He was the first Pope to come from a monastic background. John Calvin referred to him as the last great Pope).

A friend is the guardian of one's soul.

Charity as the Love of Friendship

In one of his later sermons, Augustine exhorts:

Let your charity principally be displayed as a love of friendship, which should be gratuitous. You should not have or love a friend in order to receive something from him. If you love him because he gives you money or some other temporal commodity, you love not him, but the goods he gives you. A friend should be loved gratuitously, for himself, and not for anything else. If the rule of friendship encourages you to love man gratuitously, how much more gratuitously should you love God, who commands that man be loved? Nothing is more delightful than God... You do not worship him gratuitously if you do so in order to receive something from him. Worship him gratuitously and you will receive him. (Sermon 385.3.4)

Now St. Teresa of Avila remarks that, since we are self-centered by (fallen) nature, we would not seek to love anyone except at first for selfish reasons. That's a start, she says. But as love deepens, we come to love the other for the other's sake, to the point of acquiring a love completely devoid of self-interest. We see this, for example, in the life of Mother Teresa. We saw it in the film about Monsignor Escrivà (*There Be Dragons*) where a young gal who, despite having endured terrible suffering inflicted on her during the Spanish Revolution, when taunted by the thought of how God could allow this, responds, "But I still love Him."

When it was revealed that Mother Teresa lived in total darkness for most of her spiritual journey, one of her greatest enemies, Christopher Hitchens (may he rest in peace) remarked that the revelation of her darkness gave evidence that Mother Teresa was "a confused old lady who ... had for all practical purposes ceased to believe..." Her darkness, Hitchens says, gives evidence that God was absent from her life. Imagine that: merely a confused old lady and yet one without whose compassionate love over 90,000 lepers would still remain in the gutters of the

world's cities, for there are no atheist leper colonies!

The reality: Mother Teresa's ardent desire was to love as Jesus loved her. "It hurt Jesus," she would say, "to love you and to love me." God in becoming man was spit on, mocked, crowned with thorns, and put to death. Why would He do that? LOVE. Total gratuitous love. Mother Teresa received no spiritual consolations and she did it anyway! That's the depth of love we are called to both in our relationship with Christ and in our friendships with one another.

If the love is genuine, it will

bring increase to the love of God and the love of God will increase one's love for one's friend. And genuine friendship is important to recovery. This is one of the challenges of recovery—one may have to break with false friendships that encouraged addiction and dependency. Acquiring new and healthy friendships, if they are indeed true friendships as we've discussed it, will support and encourage recovery and help us to laugh at ourselves in a good way. *

• "Rightly has a friend been called 'the half of my soul.'"

Saint Augustine

• "Love's sweetest mark, laud's highest theme,
man's most desired light.

To love Him, life; to leave Him, death;
to live in Him delight.

He mine, by gift; I His, by debt; thus each, to other due.
First friend He was; best friend He is;
all times will try Him true."

Blessed Robert Southwell

• "From quiet homes and first beginning,
Out to the undiscovered ends,
There's nothing worth the wear of winning
but laughter and the love of friends."

Hilaire Belloc

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