

ON APPLYING THE “GRAND PARADIGM”

In my earlier writings I seem to have been led by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit from a consideration of some vexing contemporary moral issues, to a paradigmatic overview of a possible beginning of a real solution to these problems. [a “paradigm” is a “key-model” if you will, a model among many that is a kind of umbrella for all of them, including itself].

The paradigm that I have already mentioned in an earlier writing is simply that of Friendship – friendship with the capital “F” – implying *the total involvement of God in the process and experience*.

I have already illustrated the fact that “in the beginning,” before the “marriage of Adam and Eve” – God created them “to be his friends.” Therefore, it would seem to me that Friendship – the Friendship authored by God – between himself and the highest form of his creation – is the *ultimate and grand* paradigm: it is a model (umbrellas) relationship on which all others, including derivative models is based.

The Divine Friendship relationship became *severed by the disobedience* of the first couple. But it was to be and indeed was ultimately restored by Jesus Christ, Son of God, who became Son of Man: or another way to say it very aptly is: “God’s-Friendship-Became-A-Man: and his name was Jesus!” Jesus loved us with the ultimate love of Friendship (which was most definitely Divine because he was involved personally): the giving of one’s life – in this case for our very freedom from sin, access to Truth, and the possibility of everlasting life!

Those who are to marry – a vocation given by God – in order to manifest his own love within himself, and for us – ought, then, first to be Friends – friends with a Divine element to their relationship: if God is not the focal point and source of their relationship and life together, then the chances of the relationship surviving as it could get very slim.

Family life – including the loving, self-sacrificial giving of husband and wife to one another – involving the acceptance of any children that God would want to introduce to their family unit – needs to be based on this Divine

Friendship, for with it comes an abundance of help and joy from the Holy Spirit for the day by day duties of marriage. The moral fabric of the family unit and society as a collection of family units, then, would be clear and clean from the very beginning and immoral decisions and actions would be at a minimum.

The unraveling of the concept of Divine Friendship I should think, has been responsible, in part, for the breakdown of healthy and meaningful relationships between people in general, family units in particular, and society as a whole. The resulting unraveling of moral principles simply follows: and is evident at many turns in society today! And when the moral decay invades civil government, it only exacerbates the problem a hundred-fold.

We are facing in our country today systemic breakdown and dissolution of moral principle in both obvious and subtle forms.

One extremely appropriate form of solution to these problems is Pope John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" – it is comprehensive, it is complete, it is brilliant. A good summary of it can be found in Christopher West's "Good News about Sex and Marriage."

As Catholic Christians, I propose that another response for the good of us all: would be to familiarize the Church with the "grand paradigm" of Divine Friendship: reverse the unraveling, and once again promote that which places God and Man in their proper relationship of:

Father/Creator/Provider/Friend

& Child/Creature/Provided For/Friend

This I would even propose as a "prequel" to Pope John Paul II's "Theology of the Body." [Indeed, as you work with it, you will come to see, perhaps, as I have that "the paradigm of Divine Friendship comes before *anything else*.

"Friend" is the one grand common denominator. All are created as Friends of God, all are called to exercise that Friendship – more need to know that it is available and how wonderful the relationship can be.

This leads to the **Church as a Communion of Friends**. If Jesus is God's-Friendship-Become-Flesh, and the Church is the Body of Christ, then we too possess the very real Divine Friendship of God – in a very special way – deep within our hearts! From the day of our baptism he is always there – as Lord, God, Savior, Brother, Friend!

Jesus is also Light of the World, and he is Peace: so therefore, if Jesus is the Friendly Peaceful Light for the entire world: then as Catholics, if we live our baptismal calling to the fullest – we too will have “Friendly, Peaceful, Light” to share with all others as well. A pure and holy and chaste life of Divine Friendship – no matter what our calling, vocation or state in life – would draw others not of our faith to join in with us, and we can be as Leaven in the world – including the world of politics – and things can change for the better!

If Christ is the Hope of the World, we too are that Hope – but we must act on it! Let us say and do what we can in a peaceful, friendship, light-bearing way – to eradicate the darkness of the night of any form of ignorance, ill-will and sin!

There are many applications of “The Grand Paradigm of Friendship” – this is only a beginning... but the Church must begin in earnest somewhere!

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Feast of St. Francis de Sales