

Mátyás Szalay

ORCID: 0000-0002-5557-1877

Instituto de Filosofía Edith Stein – Granada

Prerequisites for social friendship. Contemplation and fundamental attitude as foundational aspects of political community¹

Keywords: social friendship, attitude fundamental, benevolence, contemplation, Pfänder

Słowa kluczowe: przyjaźń społeczna, postawa fundamentalna, życzliwość, kontemplacja, Pfänder

“The development of a global community of fraternity based on the practice of social friendship on the part of peoples and nations calls for a better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good”
(Francis, 2020, n. 154).

“Everything, then, depends on our ability to see the need for a change of heart, attitudes and lifestyles”
(Francis, 2020, n. 166).

Introduction

I would like to highlight and critically explore a particularly deep insight into the nature of interhuman as well as divine-human relations expressed by the suggestive term ‘social friendship,’ one of the key terms of Pope Francis’s encyclical *Fratelli tutti*.

¹ A former version of some parts of this investigation was published in 2008 as a chapter entitled “Spiritual Friendship and the Foundations of Political Community” in J. Nowicki & C. Porebski (Eds.), *L’Invention de l’Autre* (48–83). Paris: Sandre.

The claim according to which “Universal fraternity and social friendship are thus two inseparable and equally vital poles in every society” (Francis, 2020, n. 142) is corroborated by the fundamental insights of the *Nichomachean Ethics*. In preparation for what is considered the culmination of his ethics (and thus of the good life), i.e., the explanation of contemplation, Aristotle (2014) discusses the different forms of friendship in order to single out the most profound and most noble experience of it. The claim that I would like to explicate here through a phenomenological analysis might be reformulated like this: it is the highest and most virtuous form of friendship that allows for a certain *habitus* or, as I would like to call it, *fundamental attitude* that is the existential prerequisite for contemplation.

Friendship is a superabundant experience that needs to be contemplated, yet there is a counterpart to this claim, less explicit in Aristotle’s work: we can only know who the other person in particular and the human person generally speaking is through loving contemplation. I will thus attempt here a brief elucidation of the praxis of the highest form of reflection. Then, in the third part of this essay, I will discuss how these three forms of thinking (reflection, meditation, contemplation) about friendship are expressions of three distinct attitudes towards the other as a friend.

A differentiated view of the notion of thinking about friendship and of the attitude that is required for a deep friendship should help us to single out, by way of contrast, the type of contemplation that is both motivated by and based on the experience of the deepest kind of friendship. This kind of friendship, which I shall refer to as *spiritual friendship*,² is characterized by a radical openness

² *Spiritual friendship* is a term that originates in the Christian reception of the classic Greco-Roman tradition claiming that the good life is only attainable by the human subject that is “perfectible.” Friendship was regarded as the primary existential context of doing so, as a school of virtues whose main method was the assimilation of the perfections of the friend. The Christian proposition of “*caritas*” as the highest participation in the divine nature incorporated the tradition of friendship into the various ways a new understanding of different forms of communion took shape, starting with monastic life, through the new body of a political communion up to the radically new understanding of sacramental marriage. In every Christian form of the reconsideration of friendship as a benevolent union in which true love can be practised, there appeared a certain reverence for the real bodily presence and constitution of the other, for he or she was understood in terms of a representation of the sacramental communion with Christ. Thus, the *spiritual character* of friendship is in no way an aversion toward the bodily constitution of the human person. On the contrary, here spirituality means a deeper understanding of how it is a grace that our self-giving love for the other (as a manifestation of the divine love) can be enacted *hic et nunc* in these concrete circumstances and can be expressed by giving our life for the other. The spiritual character here is therefore not opposed to the bodily, but rather integrates the soul and the body.

towards the other expressed in the highest form of benevolent attitude; thus, it is a prerequisite for the term 'social friendship' used in *Fratelli tutti*.

Any political praxis needs some set of true claims and principles in order to be able to identify the common good to which it is ordained. Some of these presuppositions are certainly of an anthropological nature; without an authentic conception of the social dimension of man, there cannot be an adequate political praxis that serves the common good. I will argue that the reflective understanding of friendship that goes along with a *fundamental attitude*³ has an essential role in the development of a sound theoretical and existential foundation for political praxis: it is the very source of the deepest anthropological truths that can be attained by natural reason.⁴ The 'communion personarum' that takes place in the context of *philia*, the friendly bond, requires the real participation of the self and a self-donation that results in much more than a mere intellectual grasp of the other. In encountering the other as a friend, we experience them both existentially and essentially, as a human person, another self, unique both in themselves and in their relationship to me. The recognition and experience of the other as friend takes place in the context of self-donation. The understanding of this special relationship through contemplation belongs to the fundamental aspects of politics.

In the following discussion, I take for granted that the idea of friendship is something that can be understood through everyday experiences. Hence, I will focus on the different possible ways the phenomenon of friendship can be accessed within consciousness. There is, however, one peculiarity that should be noted at the outset: the accessibility of friendship (and of other things, such as the intellectual capacities of the person) depends on the personal attitude one has towards the friend. That is why 'deepening reflection' on friendship, for which I am going to argue, is interlaced with the concrete praxis of 'deepening friendship.' To experience the other as a friend requires an inner dynamism that strives for the full recognition of the other *as such* in their encompassing reality, which includes all the dimensions (intellectual, volitional, emotional, spiritual, etc.) of a person's being.

Both processes (the theoretical endeavor of 'deepening reflection' on friendship, exploring its philosophical depth and the concrete praxis of 'deepening friendship') fulfill their *telos* and are fully realized in acts of self-donation that necessarily involve a certain form of abandoning oneself and

³ See further: Szalay (2011).

⁴ Over and against the modern misunderstanding of natural reason, it must be stated that it is not opposed in any way to faith; it has a clearly supernatural origin, its functioning and its ultimate purpose are both "in-formed" by the mysteries of faith, by what is beyond it.

overcoming one's self-centredness (Francis, 2020, n. 89, 114, 166, 229). Both processes (the theoretical endeavor of 'deepening reflection' on friendship, exploring its philosophical depth, and the concrete praxis of 'deepening friendship') fulfill their *telos* and are fully realized in acts of self-donation that necessarily involve a certain form of abandoning oneself and overcoming one's self-centredness (Francis, 2020, n. 89, 114, 166, 229).

This process of 'deepening friendship' is initiated by the ethically appealing appearance and the friend's self-revelatory acts and gestures. Arising from the phenomenological tradition, Emanuel Levinas (1961) offered a philosophical account of the autonomous reality of the other person that lies beyond the intentionally (p. 77).⁵ In his view, the other's appearance – their very face – asserts an embodied moral obligation that is unaccompanied by any volitional action of self-expression; it is a primary fact that precedes any intentional relation or act that has its starting point in the self. Levinas interprets this immediate appeal as an imperative: do not kill me!

⁵ Levinas does have a valid point in critiquing Husserl for not having acknowledged the radical otherness and uniqueness of the other while reducing his and her transcendence to the experiences of an alter ego, i.e., to the variations of one's self-perception. Levinas's insistence on the irreducibility of the other to the self (and thus, on the transcendence of the other) is based on a theological experience: the transcendence of God, of whom man is an image of. The human person as an *imago Dei*, however, implies a paradox that is reflected in interhuman encounters and relationships such as friendship. The otherness of the other can only be revealed in communion, i.e., in the intimacy, in the closeness where it becomes clear we share the same essence. Moreover, the more we participate in each other's life, the more we can see how different we are. The theological fact relevant to this experience is the mystery of the Incarnation. For it is the Incarnation of the divine, the absolute and radically unexpected closeness that allows for the analogical approach to explore the infinite difference that is revealed on the basis of participation. Levinas's account of experiencing the other misses this point because of his theological presuppositions in this sense. Or to formulate it more specifically, his accentuation of the experience of the encounter overshadows the correct explanation of the experience of friendship. Concerning the critique of the theological limitedness of Levinas's philosophy, see Zimmermann (2013); Zimmermann (2009); Milbank (1995).

The most concise critique of Levinas is offered in this respect by David Bentley Hart (2004) in his magnificent book *The Beauty of the Infinite*. He argues that the encounter with the other for Levinas cannot be conceived as an authentic human experience of flesh and blood because the presence of the other is converted into a formal category with no incarnated content. The notion of "visage" is a crucial point here, for according to Levinas it is not a presence but precisely a non-presence. It is the same epiphany of alterity in terms of absolute distance. In this way, the formality of the ethical response to this type of alterity comes up short concerning what is possible and even required in a world in which (as Milbank argues in his own critique) the highest good is to offer one's life on behalf of others and for others – a principle and a fundamental attitude the experience and the appropriation of which is essentially related to the praxis of friendship.

The essential core of this unspoken appeal, the affirmation of the person for their own sake (*persona est affirmada propter se ipsa*),⁶ however, is not adequately captured by negative commands. It is not just an imperative but also an invitation to adopt a *specific attitude* towards the other that might lead to the highest form of friendship.

1. On the notion of attitude (*Gesinnung*)

The initial *attitude* one must have, which makes possible the other's self-revelation as a friend, is *benevolence*. In the classical tradition, from Plato through Aristotle, Seneca (2016), Cicero (1887), Thomas Aquinas and Aelred of Rievaulx (2002; Aelredi Rievallensis, 1971), there is an agreement that mutual benevolence is a prerequisite for friendship

Let us further clarify what we mean by 'attitude' through a phenomenological analysis.⁷ There are two accounts from the twentieth-century realistic

⁶ This re-working of the second formulation of Kant's categorical imperative is referred to by Karol Wojtyła as the "personalist principle." See Wojtyła (1981); Guerra López (2010).

⁷ I think that there are at least three terms that one might take into consideration in order to fully understand the meaning of the phenomenon in question. One of them is *attitude*. The various and distinct usages of this term might help us to realize that the two 'Grundgesinnungen' (fundamental attitudes) are related to all kinds of attitudes in the manifold contexts of everyday life; moreover, these two attitudes – love and hatred (or better, attraction and aversion) – are omnipresent in relation to all possible conscious objects. This evokes an eschatological understanding of attitudes whereas the ultimate identity and personal "value" of the person – that is, completely transcendent of any human understanding – is really given according to the personal, more or less consistent and, in relation to the object, always modified attitude that has been present through their entire life and in all their actions. Here, attitude would be the capacity to love expressed in actual, i.e., immediate, spontaneous, *habitual* or even *virtuous* relationships (see the distinctions made by Pfänder on the following page) that are given for consciousness towards its objects. The German expression 'Gesinnung' has a special merit over other expressions insofar as it has an etymological relationship with the expressions 'Besinnung' (reflection, pondering upon) and 'Sinn' (meaning, sense); this allows us to see the strong relationship attitudes have with the intellectual dimension of the human person. If we think about attitudes in the sense of 'Gesinnung,' it becomes clearer that they are motivated by the conscious search for meaning that is intrinsic to human nature. The object that appears in the consciousness appears in front of the meaning-horizon; attitude, therefore – even if it is previous to a conscious decision about the meaning of the object – is always an inner position or stance of the self (acceptance or rejection) toward the object as a meaningful entity. Having a "Gesinnung" towards an object, i.e., an immediate, evaluative inner stance regarding its 'meaning,' is therefore always essentially connected to 'Besinnung.' It is a reflection that is striving to dredge up from the depth of the inner reactions and unspoken responses the object immediately provoked in us the objective meaning of the thing from the capsule in which these uncertified responses closed it up. Given its spontaneous nature, regardless of

phenomenological tradition that deserve special attention. In his work *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die material Wertethik*, Max Scheler (2012) characterizes 'Gesinnung' as a value direction, i.e., the basic moral tenor of a person.⁸ In his almost-forgotten article, Alexander Pfänder's (1913; 1916) "Zur Psychologie der Gesinnungen" offered a detailed description of the varieties of 'Gesinnungen.' As Mariano Crespo (2007) convincingly argues, these approaches should be considered as two complementary levels of analysis (p. 233). Pfänder's analysis can contribute to the characterization of the different grades of a benevolent attitude as well as elucidate the basis of the highest form of friendship, which has traditionally been referred to as 'spiritual friendship.'

According to Pfänder, 'Gesinnungen' are dispositions of the soul that can be classified as *actual*, *virtual* and *habitual*. Among *actual* attitudes, he includes those momentary dispositions of the psychic life that one has towards conscious objects. In contrast to the conscious presence of these *actual* attitudes, the *virtual* ones deploy their effect in the background of the consciousness ("*Die im Hinterbau des hellen aktuellen seelischen Leben wogende Gesinnungsbestand*" [1913, p. 331]). Crespo (2009) rightly observes

the attitudes, even if 'Gesinnung' is not yet an intellectual answer *sensu stricte*, it is strongly connected to it: it is the preparatory step of reflection as 'Besinnung.' The given 'Gesinnung' towards an object is in this sense really pre-intellectual; it is something that is previous to the intellectual response but also paves the way for it. Thanks to this relationship, a radical and profound change of the basic attitude ('Grundgesinnung') goes along with an intellectual new-birth of the person.

The third possible expression that highlights another important feature of the phenomenon in question is another German term: 'Einstellung.' 'Einstellung' or 'sich einstellen,' among other relevant significances, is used here as an inner preparation for some future event or activity. Attitude might be understood as a result of a consciously elaborated inner stance based on beliefs and general convictions. Having an attitude towards a person, however, is certainly something different from believing or not believing in a set of claims about them, for I can have an attitude towards someone that I have never met before. Nevertheless, even if the attitude is wedged between subject and object, not belonging to either of them as a property – as Pfänder rightly affirms – the conscious subject is not impotent and powerless with respect to the actual formation of attitudes, since there is a volitional decision regarding the accepting or rejecting of certain claims. However, it is a completely false but very often repeated claim that one should just be a good person and that it does not matter what kind of religious beliefs and convictions one has. Obviously, one day after another, one's beliefs are manifested in concrete moral actions, whether one is an Anabaptist or a Baptist. The inner stance towards an object, a predisposition – as is highlighted by the term 'Einstellung' – even if it is not yet a 'Stellungnahme' (taking a position through an act of judging), is certainly based on and somehow actually distilled from (rather than logically deduced from) these previously discussed standpoints.

⁸ See Scheler (2012); also Scheler (1954).

the following distinction: whereas, in the first case, there is momentary hatred or love, we can talk about virtual attitudes when one constantly loves or hates someone, even without actually thinking about this person (p. 148). *Habitual* psychic dispositions are therefore the intermediate ones that are more than actual but not yet super-actual, since they depend on the actual appearance of the object to which they are referenced.

Pfänder (1916) distinguishes love and hatred as the two basic attitudes (pp. 112–116). Benevolence, therefore, as a modification of these attitudes, has a three-fold temporally conscious state. Pfänder's analysis can be complemented by the observation that benevolence itself as an attitude has a tendency to 'run through' all these states until it reaches super-actual status. Having an actual, momentary benevolent attitude towards someone – "suddenly like a blaze kindled by a leaping spark," as Plato formulates it – is not just a psychological state, but rather a disposition that, in the case of conscious approval (as opposed to negative sanctioning), has in itself a tendency to "become self-sustaining."⁹ This momentary benevolent attitude wants to be fully realized and, by passing through the stage of a habitual attitude, it intrinsically strives to be a real determination of the psychic life that does not even need the conscious presence of the object to be effective. This tendency towards the expansion of its validity and impact does not only apply to the aspect of the temporal structure of psychological dispositions. It is also true with respect to the object of the attitude: the actual benevolent attitude towards the other already has an imminent tendency to encompass all of the person's dimensions; it is an affirmation of the person on an emotional, intellectual, volitional and spiritual level.

Pfänder (1916) gives the following essential characteristics of 'Gesinnung' (pp. 50–55, 39–71): firstly, it is wedged in-between the subject and the object. It is a property of neither the subject nor the object, but rather is that which bridges the psychological distance between the two poles. This does not mean that I cannot be properly 'benevolent towards the other person'; it means rather that this benevolence is by no means my own creation, a mere idea or product of my mind that is independent of the reality and nature of the object to which the 'Gesinnung' refers. This objective character of the 'Gesinnung' is of essential importance for comprehending the appeal of the other person, who should be affirmed in themselves and for their own sake.

A second essential characteristic noted by Pfänder (1913) is the immanent centrifugal direction of the 'Gesinnung': it always flows *from* the subject *to* the object (p. 334). According to Pfänder (1913), we are directed to objects of the

⁹ See Plato (1966), 341c–d.

inner and outer word all the time that present to us a dual possibility (p. 364): we can accept or reject them before we even make a conscious decision about them. Between the extremes of hatred and love exists a tremendous variety of attitudes that one can have towards persons, animals, lifeless objects, cultural entities, or even superhuman realities.

The third essential feature mentioned by Pfänder (1913) is that the 'Gesinnung' is not simply a certain kind of directedness towards an object (p. 360, 362). It is, moreover, a stream that – like a river – finds its influx in the object. This aspect demonstrates that even actual psychic dispositions have a more complex temporal structure than the momentary pointing to an object. Having a disposition toward an object is therefore not a separate conscious act towards an already given object of the inner or outer perception. Rather, the object is given to one already *coloured* by the dispositional readiness of the receiver.

The dispositional flux enables us to sanction the actual inner disposition we have towards an object. Even if one cannot volitionally create sentiments or dispositions (for example, it is not such an easy matter to simply 'decide' to like someone), the inner stances towards the given object (which are 'provoked' by the object itself) may be approved or disapproved of through voluntary acts. While sentiments may appear spontaneously in our consciousness, we nevertheless have the responsibility to affirm or reject these sentiments, especially if one is considering them as possible bases for action.

The fourth essential feature has already been mentioned. According to Pfänder (1913), the two basic dispositions towards an object are love and hatred (pp. 334–335, 359, 364, 367), a distinction that does not come without its problems. Even if Pfänder is correct in claiming that all of the possible attitudes between these two extremes can be reduced to either one or the other, there remains the question of whether love and hatred are really so opposed to each other. Are they really two valid types of responses? Or is it possible that there exists just one answer that can reveal itself in different ways, that these dispositions have a common foundation?

As preliminary evidence for this possible common foundation, I would like to call attention to the responsive character of any disposition. Having a disposition always already presupposes that there is an object that can be rejected or accepted prior to the existence of a conscious response or act. According to Pfänder (1913), psychic dispositions have a three-fold structure (pp. 330–332). The kernel of any disposition is the *sentimental basis* (positive or negative) that can be further modified on two levels: the higher level is

concerned with the *affirmation* or *rejection* of the object and the lower with situating the ego's position towards the object between the two possibilities of *total union* and *total separation* (p. 371, 381). The various combinations of these three stances towards the object form and define the nature of any disposition. Therefore, it is clear that the difference between love and hatred is manifested on different levels: we have to deal with two complex structures that are opposed to each other.

However, since Pfänder is concerned only with the analysis of actual dispositions, he does not take into account that there are dispositions that are volitionally approved of or rejected after intellectual revision; the habitual and virtual psychic dispositions are probably consciously reviewed, though not necessarily so. I would like to call these revised (but nevertheless still spontaneous and immediate) dispositions *attitudes*. In this sense, Pfänder (1913) (in opposition to Scheler) also affirms that attitudes can be changed and stresses the importance of the role of education in the acquisition and formation of the right dispositions (pp. 326–327).

It is necessary to maintain the distinction between unrevised and revised psychic dispositions in order to reformulate the dual option inherent to unrevised dispositions as an opposition between *aversion* and *affinity*; they are co-genuine and of the same level of spontaneity. It would be somewhat precipitous to talk about love and hatred on this level because they do not yet have a moral value. They rather – as Scheler formulates it – connect us to the ‘world of values’ by bringing values closer to us; they enable them to become perceptible in concrete objects.¹⁰

It is noteworthy that my *benevolent disposition* towards a friend, as opposed to a *benevolent attitude*, does not yet imply a volitional decision to desire the benefit of the other, and much less to prefer it to my own good. As a disposition, benevolence is only the seed of such volitional acts. It is also clear that with respect to its temporal characteristics, *benevolent attitudes* are either habitual or virtual but are certainly not mere actual dispositions.

2. A brief characterization of the attitudes

Let us now see how examining the opposition between aversion and affinity can help resolve the question of whether there exists a common ground between the fundamental options regarding attitudes.

¹⁰ Scheler also talks about “Wertrichtung,” value-directedness that characterizes our love or hatred. See: Scheler (2012), p. 34.

During the time where the dispositions are being considered, i.e., in the transitory reflective phase of developing an attitude, the spontaneous aversion or affinity reveals its reasoning according to the above-mentioned three-fold structure of psychic dispositions. The *rejection of the object*, *aversion* as a sentiment (*Gesinnungsregung*) and the *rejection of the union* – if consciously approved – are different sources of distinct kinds of aversion.

While aversion as such, the rejection of the object and the rejection of the union as parts of a *disposition* are morally neutral, as *attitudes* they have an *axiological aspect*. An attitude itself may have a negative value if the object to which the attitude refers is in itself desirable and possesses a certain dignity or value.

Besides its axiological aspect, attitudes differ from dispositions in the sense that they have a far more complicated structure than just a centrifugal relationship between subject and object. An attitude towards a person implies a certain stance towards *oneself, the other, the world and God*. These four directions form a unity, what may be called a *fundamental attitude* that manifests itself in the four previously mentioned domains of human relations. The relationship towards God is certainly the domain that is fundamental to the other three, because God is not ‘just’ present, but is also present in me, in the other person and in the world. Therefore, the *fundamental attitude* is ultimately speaking a response towards the manifold presence of God.

It is questionable if the dichotomy between love and hatred, rightly observed by Pfänder (1913) as characteristic of the actual dispositions (pp. 370–404), is still applicable to fundamental attitudes. Scheler (1957b) – who, it seems to me, incorrectly maintains this view in his otherwise superb essay “Vorbilder und Führer” – observes: “In each soul as a totality and in each moment reigns a personal basic orientation of love and hatred manifested in the preference for or rejection of values: it is its fundamental attitude. Whatever this personal soul might be able to want as well as what it might recognise, its knowledge as well as its area of activity – in one word, its possible world – is determined by this [fundamental attitude]” (p. 264, translation mine).¹¹

Before suggesting a more adequate formulation of the two fundamental options, let me highlight three important features of the Schelerian definition: 1) Scheler considers the two fundamental options as love and hatred; 2) these

¹¹ “In jeder Seele herrscht im Ganzen und in jedem Augenblick eine personale Grundrichtung des Liebes und des Hasses, des Wertvorziehens und – Nachsetzens: Sie ist ihre Grundgesinnung. Sowohl das, was diese personale Seele wollen kann, als was sie zu erkennen vermag, ihr Erkenntnis – wie ihr Wirkspielraum, mit einem Worte: ihre mögliche Welt ist ontisch durch sie bestimmt” (p. 264).

manifest themselves in the election of values; and 3) this election of values is an ontic determination of the person's world.

Concerning the second point, it is worth stressing that while dispositions are spontaneous and immediate responses that involve either a rejection or acceptance of a given value, attitudes imply a careful and thoughtful election of values; this election forms to a great extent the personality and the personal identity of an individual, especially when it involves the acceptance or rejection of the highest value, the *summum bonum*.

Scheler correctly states that the election of values – and especially of the highest value – delineates the person's world and determines what ultimately appears to them as real. Certainly, the *fundamental attitude* is decisive not only with regards to the question of whether a God who is distinct from the universe exists, but also with respect to the question of whether this world *as reality* is a religious one in all of its fundamental aspects. Leading a life with a certain fundamental attitude that consists in accepting the highest value means an affirmation of the existence and morally obliging power of a certain hierarchy of values, an affirmation that is expressed in the consistency of one's moral choices and actions.

As Scheler himself argues there is some trace of love, however imperfect, in any fundamental attitude. In his essay *Ordo amoris* he states that the fundamental moral character of a person is given through his or her *ordo amoris*, through the hierarchy of all the values one affirms in all possible senses of the word and in all circumstances. Concerning the normative sense of *ordo amoris* in contrast with the purely descriptive one, Scheler (1957a) affirms: “to love things as God loves, and to co-experience in his own acts of love the corresponding divine and human acts as coinciding in one and the same point in the world of values – this is the highest experience a human person can attain” (p. 347).¹²

Yet another relevant formulation of the fundamental attitudes is to be found in the work of St. Augustine (2009). In *The City of God*, Augustine speaks of the two fundamental but opposing loves: the love of self that precludes the love of God and the love of God that leads to the despising of oneself (XIV, 28). The main point here is not a literal rejection of the self, but rather a radical openness towards the most precious object of consciousness: the divine. “The

¹² “Die Dinge aber zu lieben möglichst so, wie Gott sie liebt, und im eigenen Aktus der Liebe das sich deckende Aufeinandertreffen des göttlichen und des menschlichen Aktes in einem und dem selben Punkte der Wertwelt einsichtig mitzuerleben, wäre das Höchste, was der Mensch vermag.”

love of the self to the extent of despising God' (2009, XIV, 28)¹³ is a description of an attitude that conceives of everything from the point of view of subjective desirability and is therefore blind to what is valuable in itself. In his analysis Scheler makes a further distinction (1957a), between 'Eigenliebe' (love of the self, whereas the self is the first and most prominent object of love) and 'echte Selbstliebe' (real, original and natural self-love, in relation to its salvation) that allows us to clarify how a certain love of self is required for one to authentically love another (p. 353).¹⁴

In my view, Augustine's description of the two types of love provides a more satisfactory basis for the formulation of the fundamental attitudes than Pfänder's account of the radically opposed dispositions of love and hatred. The attitude, as opposed to the disposition, always involves a more complex relationship that consists of the following aspects simultaneously: *the relation to the self, to the world, to God and certainly to the object in question*. Following in the footsteps of Augustine, it also becomes clear that all attitudes are based on and reducible to the *one* fundamental attitude of love. There is not love and hatred, but rather, authentic and selfish love. The latter, unlike hatred, does not so much involve an active rejection of an object. It too, is an attraction, but not primarily towards the value of the object *per se*, but rather, to the object *as it is desirable to me*. This preoccupation with one's selfish desires takes precedence over the object, leaving no room for the true love of God and fellow man. The difference appears not only in the limits and the extension of love, but more profoundly in the acceptance or rejection of the *responsive character* of this love in two distinct senses: firstly, in the sense that human love is a response that is based on the previously existing love of God, and secondly, that it is responsive to the valuable nature of an object in itself.

We can therefore complement Pfänder's phenomenological analysis of the actual psychic dispositions with the following distinction between a *benevolent disposition* and a *benevolent attitude* towards the other person. A *benevolent attitude* can be interpreted – and can only be brought to evidence – as an affirmation of the person's reality as something previously given and prior to my response to it. This attitude is deepened according to the level to which one is able to penetrate the nature of the other person. There are three distinct and, in a sense, ascending modes of reflection on the given data of the other revealed as friend. Each mode enables us to grasp a higher – or deeper – level

¹³ "Fecerunt itaque civitates duas amores duos; terrenam scilicet amor suiisque ad contemptum Dei, caelestem vero amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui."

¹⁴ See also to this point O'Donovan's (1980) discussion on Augustine's account of the three versions of sinful self-love (pp. 64–65). See as well Aristotle (1984), 1168a–b.

of the other's essential nature and lovable-ness. I will now analyse these modes of reflection, my aim being to explore how these different modes gradually lead us to fully awaken to what is revealed about the *spiritual dimension* of the person.

3. Different forms of reflectively deepening the benevolent attitude (*Besinnung*)

The shift in the actual disposition towards a person, which I refer to as 'the deepening of friendship,' is a reflective process that has different stages, accordingly to the intensity of each respective object-consciousness, temporal structure, participation of the subject-self as well as the power of illuminating the essence of the thing itself. The three stages of this process are *reflection*, *meditation* and *contemplation*.¹⁵

In order to avoid an equivocal usage of the term 'reflection,' let us understand it primarily in the sense indicated by the German term 'Besinnung,' the meaning of which encompasses the above-mentioned three stages. The original meaning of the word 'reflection' is 'bending back' on something; therefore, it suggests pondering a previously-given data. Reflection in the sense of 'bending back,' however, is just the first step in the complex process of thinking¹⁶ about

¹⁵ I rely here on the distinction by Hugo of St. Victor, leader of the mystic movement in the St. Victor Monastery. The important point of Hugo's teaching that I would like to further develop here can be summarized in two ideas: (1) the mere knowledge of something cannot be the legitimate aim of genuine human aspiration; and (2) knowledge of things should rather be understood as a springboard on the way to a richer mystical life leading through the stages of reflection, meditation, and contemplation.

The first stage of thinking corresponds to a reflective search for God and His vestiges and traces in the material world, much in the sense that *Laudato Si'* formulates as "The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God" (Francis, 2015, n. 84). A further step is meditation that is rather centred on ourselves, on how man with his inner life and conscious activity is *imago Dei*. This search reaches its culmination in contemplation directed towards the supernatural reality that is accessible in a more intuitive and immediate knowledge. Once again in the formulation of *Laudato Si'*: "The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things" (n. 233). These three different types of reflection were called the three eyes of the rational soul. Cf. Francis (2015).

¹⁶ Cf. Mulligan's (2001) phenomenological discussion of the spiritual sense of 'meinen' with respect to the difference between a phenomenological approach versus that of Wittgenstein. Especially interesting here is the observation of Wittgenstein according to which there is a spiritual set of attitudes. See: Wittgenstein (2009), § 25, § 673.

friendship. ‘Besinnung’ (*Sinn*)¹⁷ also captures a second essential feature of this ‘bending back,’ of this keeping significant data in front of us, or ‘dwelling in the garden of friendship’; it also involves ‘vigilantly looking for meaning’ (*Ausschau halten für einen Sinn*), a search for the ultimate, the success of which requires the adoption of specific attitudes.

3.1. Simple reflection

The first stage of reflection focuses on some problematic features that may arise in a given relationship, in which the source of the problem is not necessarily related to the foundations of the friendship itself. In this case, the (inner) discussion turns around the practical applicability of an idea of friendship (shared or presupposed as common ground by the friends in question) that serves as a principle of action and reaction. While internally we might be engaged with certain issues regarding friendship, the ‘idea of friendship’ itself might remain untouched on this level of *unsystematic thinking*.

The object of reflection is always embedded in some concrete context of the experience (*Erlebnis*). This is certainly true for all objects of any form of ‘Besinnung.’ In reflection, however, this context determines the meaning of the phenomenon in question that is going to be considered or enfolded in and through reflection. The specificity of reflection or its deficiency consists exactly in the fact that the spatial-temporal and personal determinations of this object are not going to be dissolved. What I mean by reflection is therefore a *pre-philosophical* and mostly *operative* form of thinking that is *problem-centred*, *context-dependent* and considers its object for the purpose of finding some practical solution. In reflection understood in this way, there is certainly not too much dwelling on the object. Nor is there an alteration of the forces, an inclination of the self, or a growing consciousness of the

¹⁷ Heidegger (1954) writes about the term ‘Besinnung’ as follows: „Eine Wegrichtung einschlagen, die eine Sache schon von sich aus genommen hat, heisst in unserer Sprache Sinnan, Sinnen. *Sich auf dem Sinn einlassen, ist das Wesen der Besinnung* (...). Sie ist die Gelassenheit zum Fragwürdigen. Durch soverstandene Besinnung gelangen wir eigens dorthin, wo wir, ohne es schon zu erfahren und zu durchschauen, uns seit lagem aufhalten” (p. 68, *emphasis is mine*). The most important feature mentioned here is the “sich auf einen Sinn einlassen,” which might be reformulated as letting oneself be directed by the objective meaning of the conscious object that reveals itself from itself. This form of thinking is opposed to mere arbitrary theory-constructions and speculative thoughts running amok. It requires an attitude that is open to considering the questionable aspects and even the blind spots of the phenomenon. Concerning attitudes, it would be a search that is interested in the origin of both fundamental options at the source of any attitude, looking for how attitudes assign paths for themselves.

ego's constitutive power: reflection remains in the intermediate field of consciousness between subject and object where appearances are formed; it basically does not penetrate into either the subjective or objective origins of the phenomenon.

It is characteristic of this level of thinking to be carried out in an ego-centric type of relationship: I am loving the other for my own sake, looking after my own interests. Therefore, I do not engage in the more complicated consideration of the nature and benefit of the other, nor on how to harmonize his or her view with mine. Here, the question is rather whether the other fulfils my own wishes, whether they fit into a previously given structure or image. At this point, the subject is yet not capable of transcending themselves and revising the pre-existing justifications that are true obstacles to an authentic knowledge of the other. The other is an 'alter-ego,' primarily (though not totally) constituted by the modification of my own experiences and then projected as reality. In other words: if there is a deeper dimension of friendship, Husserl's (2013) theory of intersubjectivity as explained in the *Cartesian Meditations*¹⁸ is inadequate, because it cannot account for real experiences in which the objective, autonomous and personal reality of the other subject as this concrete person is clearly given. His theoretical approach follows and is based on an attitude that is not sufficiently 'personalist' (since it is transcendental) and can therefore not adequately respond to reality. Given that this rather artificial transcendental attitude, described by Husserl in terms of a philosophical methodology, is proposed as the most reflective account on intersubjectivity, it has some serious ethical implications – especially so, because this theory, ultimately speaking, denies the objective and immediate givenness of the other person and presents it as a mere conscious constitution. It is noteworthy that therefore this theory cannot in any way give an authentic account of real friendship, which involves both the experience and praxis of self-giving and the re-constructing of one's personality from the external point of view, i.e., from the centre of the other. In sharp contrast to the transcendental attitude, a personalist approach¹⁹ is not based on the artificial transcendental *epoché*, but rather starts with the immediate personal experiences of the concrete other (known through friendship) – all the more so because (as Scheler noted) the human person is a peculiar object, for the person can only be intellectually discovered if he or she opens herself up willingly. Thus, this approach certainly acknowledges the objective givenness of the other person and strives to respond

¹⁸ See especially the "Fifth Meditation."

¹⁹ See Guerra López (2002).

appropriately to his or her reality. This implies a real self-transcendence as it prompts us to revise our self-identity.

The ego-centric conception of friendship is primarily based on practical necessity and utility and was considered to be the lowest form of friendship by Aristotle.²⁰ This kind of friendship goes along with a 'low-form of reflection.'²¹ It is based on a momentary, temporary disposition towards the other and is self-centred in a non-reflective way. This superficial stage of 'Besinnung' does not yet make possible real friendship; it allows only for mere companionship. In order for this loose form of social relation to become a mutual commitment based on personal appreciation, there must be a shifting of attention to those aspects of the friend that cannot be reduced to a however-modified self with his or her desires and needs. Meditation starts when we give our attention (*Achtung*) and respond to those aspects of the other person that are beyond our desire, needs and expectations, that invite us to overcome and transform ourselves.²²

3.2. Meditation

Only those who really care about the concrete other in a personal way can be truly puzzled by the nature of their relationship and thus ask deeper questions on what friendship really is. On this meditative level of reflection, one might single out the essential features of friendship by focusing on the inner structure of the phenomenon. By way of an 'eidetic analysis' we can abstract its 'necessary essential features' from the concrete appearances of friendship. Whereas on the first level the main questions of our reflection are concerned with particulars, such as how to behave in a certain social context

²⁰ See Aristotle (1984), 1156b–1157b.

²¹ There is a difference between an ego-centric and an egoistic friendship. One can be ego-centric and still not necessarily be egoistic.

²² As Husserl argued quite convincingly, the starting point of philosophical reflection is also characterized by a change of attitude (*Einstellungsänderung*). See Husserl (2013) and (1970), among other works. Even if some details of his argument are certainly doubtful – like that change happens "auf einem Schlag" – he is certainly right to stress the importance of the relationship between attitude and knowledge. Nevertheless, Husserl is not concerned with the question of what an adequate attitude for knowing another person would look like, even though he distinguishes between different attitudes (the one most relevant to our purpose is the "personalist attitude"). Practically speaking, he puts into question the applicability of this attitude for a philosophical understanding of the other, since it is directed to and is rooted in the life-world. It is to Scheler's credit that he clarifies that the 'personalist attitude' is the only one proper to knowing the other in their essence, for this is recognizing the other as an autonomous being and as a person that is not a mere object of knowledge. See Scheler (2015) and (2012).

or how to react in a particular situation involving a friend, at this second level one becomes concerned with the nature and purpose of friendship itself.

The question concerning the essence (*Wesen*) of friendship certainly differs from the quest for a general notion (*Allgemeinbegriff*) of it. In order to see its essence, it is not necessary for one to make a comparative study in order to single out what all friendships have in common. Rather, one meditates on the concrete history of the relationship, for it might implicate and reveal something that goes beyond itself and illuminates how the friendship and love expressed in this very form is enacted by and through the other person.

Let us now turn to the analysis of this second intermediate step that is essentially characterized by a *turning to the self*. Here we find a certain architectonic structure of levels or steps built on each other: *giving an immediate answer* to the concrete and mere appearance of the friend (first step); *turning to the self* due to the self-revelatory character of the appearance of the other in order to give a more adequate response (second step); understanding the other in his or her totality and ultimate givenness and consequently *giving the self* (third step). These three interconnected steps form the framework for the possible development of any friendship.

Concerning the structure of the above-mentioned steps, it is important to see that the first question does not disappear when we shift our attention to the second and more general object: the friendship itself. On the contrary, our practical concern for acting appropriately towards the friend is ultimately the very motivation for looking at the friendship itself. In meditation, it becomes clear that caring for the other is related to and rooted in the rich and manifold praxis of the '*epimelethénai seautú*'²³ (Plato, 1903, 127e2), caring for the self. This principle does not only complement the famous Delphic inscription of '*gnoti seauton*'; rather, it both contains and expounds on it, for knowing oneself (including as a friend) is a fruit of the general praxis of being concerned about the rightness of one's life. Meditation on friendship is a distinguished part of any good life.

The praxis of 'caring for oneself' might manifest itself in different forms, like the concrete exercise of examining one's conscience²⁴ or in a short meditation on the events of the day,²⁵ or even in the practice of writing a letter on friendship.²⁶ In other words, 'meditation on friendship' is still connected to (though not identical with) what was later called *synderesis*, the natural

²³ See Foucault (2005).

²⁴ See Augustine (1949).

²⁵ See Aurelius (2008).

²⁶ See Seneca (2016).

capacity or disposition (*habitus*) of practical reason to apprehend intuitively the universal of human action.²⁷ The principles of *synderesis* are rather general in form, like “Worship God” or “Do good and avoid evil,” and are then applied to concrete issues, such as friendship.

Reviewing one’s actions with the aim of discerning the good from the bad is connected to the above-mentioned natural capacity of recognizing good and evil. The revision of conscience seems to be an indispensable part of the praxis of ‘deepening friendship.’ Insofar as friendship is more than just an external bond between two persons and is based on an existential assessment of the other that is executed and expressed in self-giving acts, a frequent revision of conscience is necessary, for without this, self-possession – a presupposition for any self-giving act – would not be possible.

Moral self-awareness and recollection are also indispensable, since friendship by its very nature is based on a benevolent attitude that seeks the other’s good.²⁸ The *good of the other*, however, cannot be sought without first seeking one’s own good. The recognition of the interrelation between the *good of the self* and the *good of the other* is certainly not an attempt to reduce the transcendent love towards the other to some kind of ego-centric self-love.

One cannot overstate the practical role that meditating on the goodness or badness of our actions plays in any faithful friendship. A friend can only offer advice if they have already engaged in self-reflection and are therefore adequately disposed. Without having seen the questionable moral character of certain actions and thereafter considered their underlying motivations in the course of meditation, it is incredibly difficult to make and keep friends.

²⁷ See especially Bonaventure (1882–1902), distinction 39; Aquinas (1920), I–II, I. q. 79 and q. 94.

²⁸ Let me refer here to the precise analysis John F. Crosby (1966) offers in his book *The Selfhood of the Human Person* (pp. 98–106). In his endeavour of disclosing personal selfhood, Crosby distinguishes a stronger and a weaker form of subjectivity. “Let us consider what it is for our subjectivity to be weak, and for it to be strengthened by the act of recollecting oneself. It is the act in which persons recall not something about themselves in the past, but recall their very selves in the present, and recall themselves not as an object of cognition but of all kinds of acts” (p. 99). Further on, he makes a useful distinction between two fundamental ways of recollecting oneself which are not mutually exclusive: “I can begin to do it directly, withdrawing myself by an act of the will from the multiplicity of the things in which I am involved and collecting myself to myself. But this beginning of recollection has to be completed by a more indirect way: I can think of myself in relation to something ultimately important, such as my own death or the death of a beloved person, or think of myself before God, and I can let myself be recollected, not so much by my own act, as by the recollecting power issuing from things of ultimate significance” (p. 103). This latter form of recollection helps us to understand how meditation is related to the most noble form of ‘Besinnung’ that we contemplate here.

Friendship often requires giving the beloved person the benefit of the doubt, in the sense that behind the possibly morally doubtful appearance of their actions, there might be an honest, morally acceptable and licit purpose behind them.

Meditation is a process of reflection that looks beneath the mere appearances of actions in order to discover their underlying principles. Through meditation, one becomes aware of first the concrete and then the general distinctions between the appearance of a thing and the thing itself. Therefore, *synderesis* – and the meditation connected to it – has a preparatory character. It is a prerequisite for a higher act of thinking, another form of reflection, of a ‘Besinnung’ that is no longer focused on phenomena (i.e., interpersonal events and actions considered under the aspect of ‘goodness’ or ‘badness’ as the basic distinction). Rather, it is – to an incomparably higher extent – *led by the richer meaning of the phenomena themselves*.

In what I previously called the meditative ‘Besinnung,’ the conscious position (*Bewusstseinsstand*) of the object can be described as follows: in meditation, we focus our attention on our attitudes towards the other person. These attitudes are considered in their relation to the self and are altered. Meditation, therefore, leads to an understanding of friendship that is at the same time self-knowledge: the illumination of self-image as a friend. It does not mean, however, that in meditation one focuses exclusively on the subjective power that constitutes the object. Rather, by clarifying the nature of my bond to the other, his or her objective nature comes to the forefront.

Another difference in comparison with reflection is that meditation, as the second level of ‘Besinnung,’ considers its object in its temporal extension; it is not a revision of the actual disposition towards the other person, but rather the rethinking of the history and possible future development of my relationship with them. Consequently, it considers the other person not just as an ontologically unique individual but as a ‘personality,’ a unique self, endowed with incommunicable personal experiences and thoughts.

Meditation, therefore, is both a careful reflection initiated by *synderesis* as well as a reflection that is directed towards the identification and clarification of the essentially necessary aspects of a given friendship in comparison with other types of relationships. It starts with self-reflection, in the sense that it clarifies the meaning of a given phenomenon in relation to the self. Following up on this, meditation is elevating its focus through an inner shift of the attention to the meaning of the phenomena in themselves. Meditation, therefore, is more than just a review of moral conscience and beyond that of the consciousness; it is

a philosophical analysis of the phenomena in relation to the self that leads to a quest for the meaning of the thing in the wider context of the life-world as a complex reference-relationship (*Verweisungszusammenhang*).

3.3. Contemplation

Contemplation, as a next level of reflection, is not an isolated form of thinking. On the contrary, it is connected with and built upon the preceding reflections; only after having clarified the previous two questions of *reflection* and *meditation* can we be ready to answer the most important third question: *how friendship is related to the most intelligible Being or to the One*.

Let us briefly see in what aspects contemplation (Latin *contemplāre, con+templum*) differs from meditation. The 'temple' contained in the word suggests that contemplation occurs in a special and restricted space. It goes along with a new perception of the life-world that is based on a distinction between inside and outside, between sacred and profane spaces. It is also clear that, in the sacred space, things gain a new significance. They become signs of a new and higher reality, since they refer to a radically new and distinct network of signs and references. Contemplation as a *turning to* this new and most real sense of the phenomenon (see the term 'Besinnung') implies and requires a radical change of viewpoint or attitude. It seems logical that a *turning to* something is a *turning away* from the preoccupations of the life-world. I would certainly argue that the Christian idea of contemplation (following the logic of Incarnation) does not lose the sight of carnal problems while it does focus on something more real: divine presence amidst the world. Coming back to our example of friendship, turning our attention to the highest form of friendship does not go along with denying the importance or the preparatory character of the lower forms of friendship, both in an existential and intellectual sense. Contemplation does not erase or replace the results of reflection and meditation, since these are organic parts of the process of 'Besinnung'. It does, however, overwrite them by modifying them in relation to a wider and more profound reality, that of the Highest Being or Supreme Good. We could say: the augur watching the sky can only grasp the meaning of the transcendent sign if he already is familiar with the situation of the *polis*, which prompted him to turn his head to the higher and more intelligible sphere of reality in the first place.

Contemplating, watching the sky in the temple, is therefore a type of 'Besinnung' that is not so much devoted to how friendship is related to other life-world aspects of other phenomena, nor to how it is embedded in the

complex network of meanings characteristic of the life-world (as opposed to meditation); rather, it is preoccupied with aspects of the ultimate origin and necessary essence of the phenomenon. It is perhaps useful to remind ourselves that, according to Bonaventure (1882–1902), the way an object is in itself is identical with the object in the divine mind. Friendship as the object of contemplation can certainly be conceived of in this way.

The divine aspect of friendship that is the object of contemplation is transmitted or realized through and in experiences of self-donation and the superabundant love of the other as manifested in what St. Aelred has called *spiritual friendship*. The contemplative elucidation of this perfect friendship strives to elevate a given friendship by considering and evaluating its strengths and weaknesses *sub specie aeternitatis*.

It is clear that only the highest, purest and therefore most intelligible type of friendship can be the *object of contemplation* because there is a correlation between the highest form, the purest and most perfect kind of friendship, and the purest, most elevated type of thinking. Aristotle (2014) affirms that neither the friendship based on utility nor the one based on pleasure can lead us to contemplation (Book VIII–IX, p. 143–183). If the friendship towards the other person is clear with regards to its intentions, it does permit the investigation of its organic principles, basic foundations and ultimate aims.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle clarifies the order of the different types of friendship according to what value the participant is directed to. He does this in order to highlight the most important and only real one: the friendship among the wise men, which is based on a self-less desire for real wisdom, i.e., knowledge of the One (1157b, 1163a, 1164b). Aristotle is leading his reader with clear pedagogical intent to identify a rare type of bond among humans that, because of its openness to transcending itself to reach divine activity (contemplation),²⁹ serves as a real foundation for any good and just politics. Real friendship – as Aristotle rightly states – is a higher form of justice in its ideal and concrete form (1159b–1161b). This openness to self-transcendence and self-devotion towards the One that is both a consequence of and a prerequisite for self-giving and self-sacrificing love is discussed by Aristotle as it relates to *contemplation* just before he turns to issues of *Politics*.

Concerning the Christian ideal of spiritual friendship, it is even more clear how it is simultaneously the specific object of and necessary condition for contemplation. All other virtues hinge (Latin *cardo* = hinge) on the truth. The cardinal virtues (prudence, fortitude, temperance, justice) and the theological

²⁹ On how the virtue of the friend leads us to contemplate, see Aristotle (2014), 1169b.

virtues (faith, hope, love) are transmitted by and tangibly manifest themselves in concrete spiritual friendship. They certainly inspire contemplation.³⁰

The vision of the other person and of the self-as-person that is gained and refined in 'spiritual friendship' inspires contemplation on the nature of the *divine* person as the true and only source – and the highest realization and embodiment – of pure perfection.³¹

Already for Aristotle it is contemplation that most clearly reveals that the *human person is not self-sufficient* (Aristotle, 2014, 1169b–1170b), for the Christian understanding of contemplation is the form of an intense encounter with the divine person that illuminates what personhood really means.

Without having understood the nature of the highest possible personal communion, its principles and its foundations, we cannot develop a true theory of political community.

Summary

In order to characterize the special nature of the 'spiritual communion,' let us compare it with the above-mentioned forms of relationship that are connected with a less benevolent attitude, leading to a lower level of thinking (or 'Besinnung') regarding friendship. These forms of relationships, in which the virtues are not present in a pure form – neither as an intention, nor as realized – have a less intelligible structure and are therefore less accessible epistemologically. The more perfect the relationship, the more intelligible it is, and therefore, the more it permits a higher form of reflection by its very nature.³²

The distinction between different relationships is, however, prior to the intelligibility that is essentially marked by a lesser or greater amount of love binding the participants together. An occasional encounter does not evoke the same amount of sympathy and love, neither does it point to the same type of unity that is demonstrated by *a turning to the other person* or by *self-donation on an emotional, intellectual, volitional and spiritual level*.

The interpersonal relationship is normally characterized by its grade of participation. This participation, however, depends on which personal layer

³⁰ G.K. Chesterton (1986, 124 ss) notes the paradoxical relation between the classic versus the Christian understanding of virtues. This paradox is dissolved in the free gift of the self and more specifically in giving one's life for the other. Both traditions recognise this as the highest virtue.

³¹ See Paul VI (1965), n. 24; John Paul II (1983), ch. 9.

³² See on the perfection of friendship: Aristotle (2014), 1169a.

is involved. As a complete union, 'spiritual friendship' requires a benevolent attitude that is characterized (according to the above-mentioned structure described by Pfänder) by a total affirmation of the object, a positive emotional response to it and a wish for union between subject and object on the emotional, intellectual and volitional levels. In this sense, spiritual friendship is not only one possible form of interpersonal relationship, but is the very *measure* for all other, less intense relationships. It is not only a radically new type of communion – when compared with the others – it is the communion that is necessary for making an objective judgement on the value of any personal relationship. Even for someone who never had the privilege of entering such a bond and experiencing that kind of personal growth, it is known at least as an objectively existing image that serves as a directing object of desire: a complete, harmonious union between human persons that is in no way a burden, but rather, the perfect realisation of freedom. There is no better, more perfect realisation of human freedom than a self-giving act.

The contemplation of spiritual friendship is concrete and universal at the same time,³³ for it considers a factual situation but in its highest, most essential form. The highest form of friendship – as I argued above – consists of and is only reached by possessing a special form of benevolence towards the other. Wanting the good for the other on a spiritual level means nothing less than desiring salvation for their soul; therefore, this benevolence is connected to an eschatological hope³⁴ concerning the other, to an eschatological vision that is also expressed in and related to a certain kind of (realist) metaphysics.

Contemplation is also an activity that is the highest form of *self-care*, since one strives in contemplation for a unified meaning of all experiences and through this, for peace. This original and ultimate meaning can only be attained by a complete devotion to the origin of the soul, i.e., through being re-united ("religare," religion) with the One. Thanks to this active and yet receptive process, the soul is reconstructed around this new centre that is the transcendent and loving One. In the process of being directed to the One, the meaning of salvation as well as the concrete and personal ways to attain it are clarified and developed. Knowing these ways in their general validity,

³³ See to this point the notion of false universalism in: Francis (2020), n. 100.

³⁴ In spiritual friendship, we not only want happiness for the other (in the sense of the German term 'Glück'), but rather, we hope for what is called 'Glückseligkeit': the happiness that comes from the realisation of one's status as redeemed that can (and should) already happen in this world. Nevertheless, it does have an eschatological dimension; as a realization, it refers to the eschatological future, which we have a prenotion and a pretaste of. See Szalay (2012).

living according to this knowledge and being able to transmit this knowledge to others form a wisdom that is gained by the practice of contemplation and that is the living centre of any good friendship. In this sense it is noteworthy that, as wisdom forms the centre of friendship, any good friendship is based on philosophy in the sense of seeking and transmitting the wisdom of love.

Contemplation on friendship is in this sense a reflection on the salvation of the other person's soul, on the intellectual, emotional and volitional ways of a *periagogé psyche*, or *metanoia*, of a turning around of the soul.³⁵ This reflection originates in a benevolence *par excellence*: wanting the eternal and perfect happiness for the beloved person and therefore wanting a way of life for them that enables them to reach it. This all-encompassing attitude of benevolence should be the necessary prerequisite and foundation of any political community.

Bibliography

- Aelred de Rieval. (2002). *Sobre amistad espiritual. Oración pastoral* (M. Ballano, Trans.). Editorial Monte Carmelo.
- Aelredi Rievallensis. (1971). *Opera omnia, 1: Opera ascética et mystica* (Anselm Hoste and C.H. Talbot, Eds.). Brepols.
- Aquinas, T. (1920). *Summa Theologiae* I–II, I. In *The Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas* (2nd, Revised Ed., Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Trans.). Online Edition Copyright © 2017 by Kevin Knight. <https://www.newadvent.org/summa/>.
- Aristotle. (1984). *Politics*. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (J. Barnes, Ed., B. Jowett, Trans.). Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1885).
- Aristotle. (2014). *Nicomachean Ethics* (Revised Ed., R. Crisp, Ed., Trans.). Cambridge University Press.
- Augustine. (1949). *The Confessions of Saint Augustine* (E.B. Pusey, Trans.). JM Dent & Sons.
- Augustine. (2009). *The City of God* (M. Dods, Trans.). Hendrickson Publishers.
- Aurelius, M. (2008). "29th letter to Marcus Cornelius Fronto". In M. Aurelius & M.C. Fronto, *Marcus Aurelius in Love*. University of Chicago Press.
- Bonaventure. (1882–1902). *Commentary on the Sentences, Book II*. In *Doctoris seraphici S. Bonaventurae opera omnia*, 10 vols. Quarrachi.
- Chesterton, G.K. (1986) *Heretics*. In: *Collected Works* I, San Francisco.
- Cicero. (1887). *De Officiis; De Senectute; De Amicitia, and Scipio's Dream* (A.P. Peabody, Trans.). Little, Brown, and Company.
- Crespo, M. (2007). "Esbozo de una fenomenología de las disposiciones de ánimo". *Dialogo Filosófico* (68), 229–249.

³⁵ See Francis (2020), n. 114, 166.

- Crespo, M. (2009). "Sobre las Disposiciones morales de fondo". *Thémata. Revista de Filosofía* (41), 144–160.
- Crosby, J.F. (1996). *The Selfhood of the Human Person*. Catholic University of America Press.
- Foucault, M. (2005). *The Hermeneutics of the Subject. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Francis. (2015). *Laudato Si': On care for our common home*. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_encyclica-laudato-si.html.
- Francis. (2020). *Fratelli Tutti: On fraternity and social friendship*. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_encyclica-fratelli-tutti.html.
- Guerra López, R. (2002). *Volver a la persona. El método filosófico de Karol Wojtyła*. Caparrós.
- Guerra López, R. (2010). "Personalismo: Perspectivas hacia el futuro. Hipótesis sobre la importancia de "volver a la persona" para la vida del personalismo como filosofía y como movimiento". In F.L. Garnica Ríos, S.L. Ramírez Orozco, & W.F. Puentes González (Comp.), *Philosophia Personae. Una antropología para el siglo XXI* (161–194). Congreso Internacional de Philosophia Personae, Oct. 4–8, 2010, Departamento de Humanidades, Universidad Católica de Colombia. https://repository.ucatolica.edu.co/bitstream/10983/19722/1/Una-antropologia-para-el-siglo-XXI_Cap12.pdf.
- Hart, D.B. (2004). *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Heidegger, M. (1954) *Gesamtausgabe: Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Günther Neske.
- Husserl, E. (1970). *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: An introduction to phenomenological philosophy*. Northwestern University Press.
- Husserl, E. (1976). *Husserliana III/1: Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Erstes Buch: allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Husserl, E. (2013). *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- John Paul II. (1983). *Blessed Are the Pure of Heart*. St. Paul Editions.
- Levinas, E. (1961). *Totalité et infini*. Nijhoff.
- Milbank, J. (1995). "Can a gift be given? Prolegomena to a future Trinitarian metaphysics". *Modern Theology* 11 (1), 119–161.
- Mulligan, K. (2001). "Getting Geist-Certainty, Rules and Us". In M. Ouelbani, Ed., *Cinquantenaire Ludwig Wittgenstein*, Proceedings of the 2001 Tunis Wittgenstein conference (35–62). University of Tunis. <https://philarchive.org/archive/MULGG>.
- O'Donovan, O. (1980). *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*. Yale University Press.
- Paul VI. (1965). *Gaudium et spes*. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

- Pfänder, A. (1913). "Zur Psychologie der Gesinnungen. I". In E. Husserl (Ed.), *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 1 (325–404). Max Niemeyer Verlag.
- Pfänder, A. (1916). "Zur Psychologie der Gesinnungen. II". In E. Husserl (Ed.), *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 3 (1–125). Max Niemeyer Verlag.
- Plato. (1903). "Alcibiades". In J. Burnet (Ed.), *Platonis Opera*. Oxford University Press. Greek text taken from the Perseus Digital Library (May 2009), <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>.
- Plato. (1966). "Seventh Letter". In *Plato in Twelve Volumes* 7 (R.G. Bury, Trans.). Harvard University Press/William Heinemann Ltd. Translations taken from the Perseus Digital Library (May 2009), <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>.
- Scheler, M. (1954). *Vom Wesen der Philosophie und der moralischen Bedingung des philosophischen Erkennens*. Francke Verlag.
- Scheler, M. (1957a). "Ordo Amoris". In *Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, Bd. 1: *Zur Ethik und Erkenntnislehre* (347–376). Francke Verlag.
- Scheler, M. (1957b). "Vorbilder und Führer". In *Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, Bd. 1: *Zur Ethik und Erkenntnislehre* (255–344). Francke Verlag.
- Scheler, M. (2012). *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*. BoD – Books on Demand.
- Scheler, M. (2015). *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie (1913–1923)*. InteLex Corporation.
- Seneca, L. (2016). "Letter 35". In *Letters from a Stoic*. Xist Publishing.
- Szalay, M. (2011). "On the Different Forms of Self-Love". In C.M. Gueye (Ed.), *Ethical Personalism* (45–66). De Gruyter.
- Szalay, M. (2012). "La felicidad espiritual. Meditación sentado al pie de la Cruz". *Open Insight* 3 (3), 87–111. <http://openinsight.mx/index.php/open/article/view/42/36>.
- Wittgenstein, L. (2009). *Philosophical investigations*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Wojtyła, K. (1981) *Love and Responsibility* (H.T. Willetts, Trans.). Ignatius Press.
- Zimmermann, N.K. (2009). "Karol Wojtyła and Emmanuel Levinas on the Embodied Self: The Forming of the Other as Moral Self-disclosure". *The Heythrop Journal* 50 (6), 982–995.
- Zimmermann, N.K. (2013). *Levinas and theology*. A&C Black.

Summary
Prerequisites for social friendship.
Contemplation and fundamental attitude as foundational aspects of
political community

This article aims to shed some light on how spiritual friendship (the deepest form of friendship that necessarily implies contemplation) is a prerequisite of 'social friendship' – the key to any good politics. I elucidate two essential aspects of this relationship between friendship and politics: disposition (or, attitude) and reflection in terms of contemplation. The required attitude – a deeper concept than disposition – for any friendship is benevolence. I argue, along with Pfänder, that there are different kinds and grades of dispositions that can be distinguished from attitudes. Furthermore, I point out (with reference to Scheler's analysis) that a fundamental attitude ("Grundgesinnung") exists, and I describe the nature of the possibilities inherent to it. In the second part, I introduce the notion of 'Besinnung' with its three variations of reflection, meditation and contemplation. Finally, I argue that there is an essential relationship between the highest form of benevolence (as the manifestation of the positive fundamental attitude) and the highest form of the contemplation of friendship. Penetrating into these two phenomena both intellectually and existentially, one might better understand the gift of friendship. In friendship, the other person reveals themselves not only as this specific person, but also *as a person* with the utmost clarity. I argue that without these fundamental insights, one can hardly imagine any just political community.

Streszczenie
Warunki przyjaźni społecznej.
Kontemplacja i postawa fundamentalna jako podstawowe aspekty
wspólnoty politycznej

Artykuł ma na celu rzucić nieco światła na to, w jaki sposób duchowa przyjaźń (najgłębsza forma przyjaźni, która z konieczności wiąże się z kontemplacją) jest warunkiem wstępnym „przyjaźni społecznej” – kluczem do każdej dobrej polityki. Objaśniam dwa zasadnicze aspekty tego związku między przyjaźnią a polityką: usposobienie (lub nastawienie) i refleksję w kategoriach kontemplacji. Wymaganą postawą – to coś głębszego niż usposobienie – w każdej przyjaźni jest życzliwość. Twierdzę, za Pfänderem, że istnieją różne rodzaje i stopnie skłonności, które można odróżnić od postaw. Ponadto zwracam uwagę (w odniesieniu do analizy Schelera), że istnieje postawa fundamentalna (*Grundgesinnung*), i opisuję charakter związanych z nią możliwości. W drugiej części wprowadzam pojęcie *Besinnung* z jego trzema odmianami: refleksją, medytacją i kontemplacją. Na koniec dowodzę, że istnieje zasadniczy związek między najwyższą formą życzliwości (jako przejawem pozytywnej postawy fundamentalnej) a najwyższą formą kontemplacji przyjaźni. Wnikając w te dwa zjawiska zarówno intelektualnie, jak i egzystencjalnie, można lepiej zrozumieć dar przyjaźni. W przyjaźni druga osoba objawia się nie tylko jako ta konkretna osoba, ale także jako osoba z największą jasnością. Twierdzę, że bez tych podstaw trudno wyobrazić sobie sprawiedliwą wspólnotę polityczną.