

Chapter 17

The Salvation of Desire: Saint Augustine's Perspective



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Abstract Saint Augustine makes desire the axis for his understanding of human life. On it, he establishes the relationship with God as its origin and end, through the creation and necessity of the encounter with Christ.

In this way, he establishes the *via interioritatis* as a reference to the truth of desire, which must find in original love both the point of departure for and the response to the problem of evil.

He integrates the ontological principle of existence with the affective principle of transformation in the beloved. At this point, we can see an important evolution from the initial principle of *uti* and *frui* in an integration of the value of personal alterity into this movement, which opens it up to the experience of friendship as a necessary light in human life.

The conception of desire is essentially dynamic, and in it is where we see the relationship it establishes between the bodily senses and the light of intelligence.

Desire lives internally in deep paradox; it rests only in the end that cannot reach by itself what we must understand as the “Salvation of desire.” In this sense, Saint Augustine takes an affective and operative vision of grace. Thus, the relationship between the gift and the beatitudes will be the ultimate truth of desire, capable of reaching the happiness promised by God.

Keywords Love · Creation · Salvation · Alterity · Affection

“Do not go out, return to yourself. Truth dwells in man’s interior. And if you find that your nature is mutable, transcend to yourself” (*De Vera Religione*, 39, 72). In this phrase, we can summarize the key that allows Saint Augustine to enter into the mystery of human personhood. In fact, he uses it to establish the internal structure of the *Confessions*, which describes his own life as an encounter with God by means of

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a double movement through which God *draws him to himself* and reveals himself to him. This key contains a precise anthropological significance in which the integrity of the human person can be seen within a theological framework where affections play a fundamental role (Flórez 1965). It involves an original perspective in which the encounter with truth is the axis of personal salvation, because, in it, a man finds certain participation in eternity. The specificity of his approach lies in that it is intrinsically linked to a loving truth, as the only one that involves the human person in his entirety and responds to his identity from a perspective that makes the person partake of the divine life. That is what this beautiful cry expresses: “he who knows the truth, knows it; and he who knows it, knows eternity. Charity knows it” (*Confessiones*, VII, 10, 16).

We are referring to a specific mode of knowledge, in which the relationship between the person and the God is always implied; to a fundamental search that defines the life of man and involves the person in his entirety. Its first place is the created reality of man in the divine image, which is geared toward a plenitude that subsists in man as a divine flame. As the holy doctor often says, “the good is to unite myself to God” (*Confessiones*, VII, 11, 17).

The manner in which the aforementioned way is presented reveals that its defining point lies on a shift towards man’s interiority. The “return to oneself,” which appears to negate the first movement of exteriority, sustains this way in the God–man relationship. It is not so much a negation of exterior things, as it is a principle of unity that allows us to understand the meaning of intimacy from *order*, sustained by the transcendent relationship that leads to God. This dynamic relationship carries a cognitive and dialogical sense in man in such a way that for him the end of human desire is nothing other than, “to know myself, to know you” (*Soliloquia*, II, 1, 1). Hence, the precise name of *via interioritatis* is given to the way of interiority by which man discovers the divine light (*via illuminationis*) that illuminates his way with truth’s eternity, saves him and makes him say: “hence, warned to return to myself, I entered in my inward self [*intima mea*] with your guidance. . . Oh eternal truth, and true charity, and loved eternity!” (*Confessiones*, VII, 10, 16).

The steps of this way are existential, that is, they are understood insofar as they are experienced in a way that involves man’s liberty. It is the person himself who discovers his inward self in such experience. Saint Augustine centers his theological understanding of *confession* in it, which is the key to his way of entering his inward self. It involves the ability to express the intimate truth that God has revealed and that he does not know completely. This is the scope that introduces us to affectivity, because affectivity is always understood as a way of becoming present to oneself, a form of intentional and truthful presence (Di Giovanni 1965b).

17.1 Love and Desire

From this way of being present to oneself, which is the dynamic basis of human identity, the bishop of Hippo is able to outline an entire dynamism that must be traversed in order to arrive to the repose in God. Hence, he is able to identify a range of levels in this movement of the soul that allows us to better understand the role of affectivity in his theological thought, which always stems from God's first Love.

In his manner of experiential reflection, the author follows the structure of conscience, because the knowledge of oneself is a central point in the itinerary. He has a dialogical (we could say "confessional") idea of conscience, always united to a previous movement that gives it a first meaning. Saint Augustine understands it from the category of *mystery* due to the question that arises inwardly: "I asked a great question to myself and asked my soul why it was sad and why it disturbed me greatly, and it did not know what to answer me" (*Confessiones*, IV, 4, 9). It is a question he asks himself after the death of his closest friend that causes this disturbance. In such awakening to conscience, the experience of suffering plays a central role as an event that is able to cause in man a return to himself in his search for the truth that transcends and identifies him. Suffering allows him to access an inward presence he had not previously valued sufficiently. There is a type of human vulnerability that touches this inward self and lounes man to a quest for a type of meaning that encompasses life as a whole (Grygiel 2002).

Man can come to know himself from an interior light of cognitive nature that ultimately comes from, and places him before, God. Therefore, man must acknowledge God both as transcendent and intimate at once: "You were, then, more inward to me than my inward self and higher than the highest in me" (*Confessiones*, III, 6, 11). This marks his interiority with the truth about himself engulfed in such light. God's position in relation to man is based on a radical difference of ontological nature; but one only becomes aware of it when, in fact, one already *desires*; when a man is necessarily in movement toward God.

Love is the beginning of the movement, with a metaphysical radicality. It is based on the famous affirmation: "*Pondus meum amor meus; eo feror, quocumque feror*" (*Confessiones*, XIII, 9, 10). The word *pondus*¹ carries the sense of the first foundation of the dynamic of love (Cain 1976). It involves an ontological beginning that centers on God's position as the source of attraction of all things and on love as the principle [*avrch.*] of universal movement (O'Brien 1958). This comparison finds its roots in the Aristotelian resolution of the *e;rwj* within the metaphysical conception of the Greek philosopher interested in solving Parmenides' Eleatic problem. The movement exists, and it is not mere appearance, because all things are drawn by God "as being loved" (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1072b3. Méndez 1990). Without losing this ultimate foundation in being, Saint Augustine highlights its anthropological aspect, because his interest lies primarily in understanding how man is able to partake of this initial universal movement of attraction to God, with his existential

¹Besides the one already cited: *Ibid*, IV, 14, 22; 15, 27; VII, 17, 23; X, 4, 5; 40, 65; and XIII, 7, 8.

importance rooted in creation. Thus, he outlines a movement of love that is necessary in its inception, but in which conscience and liberty have an essential role. This starting point *is not a movement*, but a principle of movement, as it occurs with weight; therefore, it can be attributed to God, for it contains no imperfection, something impossible for the Greek philosopher. “Prior to the motion there seems to be a tendency or inclination to the lovable object which is yet not the motion. This tendency or inclination precedes both the motion to, and the possession of the object. In the loving agent, in the lover, it is the dynamic force and thus the first cause both of the motion, and later of the possession of the object” (Diggs 1947).

We have arrived at a necessary distinction between the original principle and the interior movement of man, between a creature inserted in this movement and the eternity to which he is called. This distinction allows us to speak of the Love in God without attributing an imperfection to him. Yet, inasmuch as everything is linked to this movement, the relationship between desire and love in man is not clear. According to the author, effective desire and natural tendency are completely parallel, as in Middle Platonism (Giacon 1964).

In any case, we can distinguish in this situation the twofold aspect that characterizes human affection: an initial passivity due to the reception of something, but that in man is also dynamic as a calling to his liberty, in a quest for the meaning to understand the truth about himself. The final creative framework, with its absolute value, necessarily introduces God in this dynamism with a principle of revelation. In Saint Augustine, the topic of God does not focus on his existence, but on creation, as an essential point needed to overcome the Manichaean view of an evil God creator.

Hence, according to the author, affection, and particularly desire, contains a clear sense of mediation between the first ontological movement and the free conscious action of man. His nature can be understood as an “affected being,” recognizing in his inward self a presence that moves him. The saint explains it as an interior thrust whose cause ultimately refers to God, to whom he says, “You struck my heart with your word, and I loved you” (*Confessiones*, X, 6, 8). This initial strike always appears in the horizon of a happy life due to a divine calling, because, “We all desire to live happily, and there is not a single one among humankind who does not assent to this affirmation, even before it is made” (*De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*, I, 3, 4). The radical attraction to happiness gives unity to the human experience and to the role of affections in his inward self.

In this dynamic, Saint Augustine experientially places deficiency as a beginning (something proper to desire); man’s weakness and his own misery are always in the beginning. Yet not exclusively, for the reference to the original love of God always opens him up to hope, and requests a bigger love: mercy. Man must discover himself in his radical frailty but rooted in the calling of divine love to plenitude, is the place where he finds his true identity. In this point, corporeality is of key importance. It involves the correlation between misery and mercy (*In Iohannis Euangelium tractatus CXXIV*, tr. 33, 5). In Saint Augustine’s thought, the body has a necessary mediation in human experiences. The bishop of Hippo grants a big role to the corporeal senses, also regarding spiritual realities. In this respect, he explains the possibility of man to be affected by reality and discover a meaning that surpasses

them, because they are in fact related to the eternity of truth in the spirituality of intimacy (Capánaga 1958). Through the senses, man already experiences the way of interiority and transcendence in a particular manner, which corresponds to the affective world of the human heart that defines man.

Hence, he identifies a double reference in man with regard to the affective world that characterizes human intimacy: man lives in internal existential tension, an aspect the saint never fully resolves. On one hand, there is the dynamism he discovers as *desire*: the movement toward plenitude, which adopts many aspects of the classical *e;rwj*, as Plato understood it; as the impulse “of generation and of birth in beauty” (Plato, *The Symposium*, XII, 206, E). On the other hand, there is a great intuition that resolves the severe deficiency of Greek thought, which could not discover the *origin* of desire *in a creating love*. The original and creative love of God is essential in giving desire its own consistency. Man must not abandon himself to desire, for rather, it allows him to discover the saving plan of God.

Therefore, the cognitive capability of love to reveal its own origin, is fundamental. We must keep in mind that this reference to the principle of desire, precisely the one Plato considered the main point necessary to speak of a truth regarding the *eros* (Reale 1997), is now the one Saint Augustine understands as the definitive point for man. It is what makes him say, “man was created so a beginning could exist, for it did not exist before him” (*De Civitate Dei*, XII, 21. Cfr. Arendt 1978). He is referring to man's experience that where there is a personal love, there is something new in the world. With this loving existential novelty, the world's confinement to a fatalism incapable of bringing about any type of novelty is destroyed. Love bursts into the cosmos with a transcendent value in which its radical openness to salvation must be perceived, due to its relation to an ever-greater love it can unite to (Kampowsky 2008).

This is the reference point needed to understand the role of memory in the Thagastian doctor as a fundamental beginning of human action as a type of “memory from birth” (Kampowsky 2013). Thus, affection is attached to the identity of man anchored in a gift received from a father, a generative fundament that contains the promise of salvation. Everything refers to a creating and life-giving first gift. Hence, he attributes the proper name of “gift” to the Holy Spirit, that is, he conceives him as a “person-gift” (*De Trinitate*, V, 11, 12), a reality he will always consider as the need for grace in human existence. We must bear this last reference in mind because it contains an interesting interpersonal relationship that the saint intuits and that we will explain at the end of our short study.

With his reference to the beginning, Saint Augustine stresses the dynamic difference between desire and love, from a lover's point of view; although he finds it difficult to later articulate both of these within the human action. He must resort to an innovative affirmation that becomes a light in the understanding of affections. They do not occur separately, rather, a harmony can be seen among them, founded in presence itself as the fundament of an original love. That is, love must be considered the first mover of every affective movement. Saint Augustine describes affective variety from the first love thus: “The love that longs to have what is loved, is desire; the one that rejoices in having it, is joy; the one that flees that which opposes it, is

fear; the one that is felt when that which is feared occurs, is sadness” (*De Civitate Dei*, XIV, 7). Is a dynamic relationship sustained by the intentionality of becoming one with the loved; the different ways of attaining this union give room to various affections, man can learn and interpret these meaning. Thus, the entire dynamic of affection participates in the logic of love, which, especially, introduces it in God’s intimacy (Simon 1987).

17.2 Radical Affectivity and the Meaning of Love Between “*uti*” and “*frui*”

By viewing affectivity in a dynamic way and as the principle of liberty, the bishop of Hippo finds a base to proceed with a new terminology of love, particularly regarding the difficult question of the translation of the Greek terms “*eros*” and “*agape*”. Initially, the saint held Saint Ambrose’s synthesis between Origen, who had given a Christian meaning to the term *eros*, and Cicero, who acknowledged a social and personal value in *caritas*, with its clear affective fundament. The pair *love-caritas* was still understood from a dialectic of opposition. It was Saint Augustine who saw an unquestionable truth that greatly illuminated the realm of affectivity: *charity is a type of love*, it can oppose a disordered love, but not an affective love. “Love” had to be taken as the generic word that would later sustain the interior dialectic of affections. Our author abandons the *love-caritas* opposition when he places love as the base of the pair “*caritas-cupiditas*” (Arendt 1996).

Thus, for the first time, *love* is considered the base of all other affections and asks for their interior order, this is the base of the Augustinian conception of *ordo amoris*. He obtained the expression from Origen’s commentary on the *Song of Songs*, which stated that the attraction of love must be ordained toward the loved one, and within the ultimate love of God, that orders all other loves. The Alexandrian says, “Thus is the order [of love] and its measure: in God’s love there is no measure, no mode, but this one – that you show it all the love you can. In Christ Jesus, God must be loved with one’s whole heart, soul and strength. There is no measure in this. In the love to neighbor there is a measure, for he says, ‘you should love your neighbor as yourself’” (Origen, III).

In fact, this order proper to love grants certain intelligibility to affection, which was not clear in the preceding tradition, for the aspects of passion exhausted the understanding of *eros*. By contrast, in Saint Augustine it is possible to speak of a *logic of affections* that explains their interior order.

In this context, the Augustinian theory of the duality of love emerges, which he initially expresses through the pair “*uti-frui*.” We find the formula in his first philosophical works and expresses it thus: “*Fru* is the love that unites itself to a certain thing for its own sake; *uti*, on the other hand, for use” (*De doctrina cristiana*, I, 4, 4). He addresses love differently in each type; the being that is loved “*propter se*” (“for its own sake”) now becomes the point that gives order to

all other things. As it appears in his writings, the division has a sense of unity, it deals with that which is ultimately wanted. It is a term that is exclusive from any other. Through it, our saint incorporates a free and conscious intentionality in the lover, always understood as a response to the good before him. This novelty will be an important part of his thought and he will never abandon it. In fact, it becomes indisputable in Early Scholasticism.

The stated division is a synthesis used to resolve a twofold question that became the central concern for Augustine with regard to his own life: the problem of *evil*. Distinguishing between both types of love allowed for a simple way of defining mortal sin from a disordered love: "For all human perversion, also called vice, entails wanting to use that which must be enjoyed and enjoy that which must be used" (*De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, q. 30. Cfr. Di Giovanni 1965a).

We must analyze this approach regarding a disordered love that explains human evil. Due to Augustine's own experience of guilt, the problem of evil became for him a recurring topic and the main reason that led him to Manicheism. He felt the need to explain the interior division that dominated him, similar to that which the poet Ovid expressed: "*video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*" (Ovid, 7, 20–21). Manicheism proposed a simple solution by attributing the source of evil to an evil god who had created the material world; this left man free from responsibility, for his somatic part could not help but go against the spirit. Our saint was able to free himself from such errors, for he understood that the reality that identified man and illuminated his experience could not be denied: the fact that man was created and called by God in liberty to respond to him. He had also understood that both matters, creation and liberty, were deeply united. An emanationist sense of the world leaves no room for human liberty, and merely apparent liberty is not capable of illuminating the truth of man's life.

The solution that the revelation of the Christian God offered to him parted from the unquestionable historical fact of God's will to establish a free covenant with man as the font of salvation. Hence, the issue of evil that haunted him remained on the opposite pole of the relationship. It could not be attributed to God nor to his work; thus, it had to lie on the human *form of response*, not on the simple fact of responding, which was both necessary and free. By responding to the love of God expressed in creation, man could love badly, in such a way that by loving good things in a disordered manner, they would separate him from, God. To explain this fact, our saint relies on the double movement supplied by the initial ontological *pondus*: heavy realities fall, and light ones ascend. This duality of movements specified by their ends, allows him to recur to symbolism, depicting heaven and earth as two different poles of attraction in man. He refers to the two possible horizons man encounters, which also sustain his division *caritas-cupiditas*. The base of the two loves adds the subject of the end to the subject of ontological attraction, from a creative point of view, as he describes it with regard to the account of creation: "To whom will I tell this? How will I convey the weight of concupiscentia that leads to the abrupt abyss, and the sublimity of the charity that comes from your Spirit, who hovered above the waters?" (*Confessiones*, XIII, 7, 8).

The step from the ontological to the personal realm is achieved by the mediation of an attribute of love that can only be explained through affection: *love transforms the lover into the loved one*. This is a distinctive reality of affection that Saint Augustine naturally inserts in the dynamic sense of God's image within an underlying exemplarism: to be made in the image of something includes the tendency to transform into the exemplar that attracts him. In our case, the movement of love includes a new characteristic: it is sustained in love itself, insofar as it contains a *conversive* meaning. This is the deep sense it had acquired in Platonism, as Pseudo-Dionysius expresses it, "all created things are converted to its cause" (PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS, c. 9, §6). On one hand, the ultimate and ever-present fundament is the basic attraction to the good that is creatural and radically good due to the divine ordering. On the other, there is a deviation from the end in which man falls by *loving* good things *in an evil manner*. Based on this reasoning, he can formulate the definition of sin. "All sins are contained in one reality, that whoever commits them, separates himself from divine things, which are truly stable, and turns to those that are mutable and uncertain" (*De libero arbitrio*, I, 16, 35).

Having understood the framework of this division, we can now describe the dynamism it performs, for in it, the role of affection is shown with all its transformational value. Saint Augustine spends time explaining this effect of love, giving clear examples that leave no doubt. He explains it thus, in his *Commentary on the First Letter of Saint John*: "Just as one is, so is his love. Do you love the earth? Then you are earth. Do you love God? What will I say; that you are God? I dare not say it for myself, let us listen to the Scriptures: 'I say, you are gods and sons of the Most High' (Ps 81:6)" (*In Epistolam Iohannis ad Parthos*, II, 14). This progressive transformation of the lover into that which he loves, becomes part of the understanding of the dynamic of love in High Scholasticism. As Hugh of Saint Victor formulates it: "for this is the force of love that transforms the lover into the loved one" (Hugh of Saint Victor).

This transformation cannot be understood without the *intentionality of the lover*, which in love includes a particular end. Love is necessarily attracted by something good, but we choose the *manner* in which we love from an interior preference. Here, the moral dimension is very explicit in our author, within a clear logic of love in which the correlation between love and liberty is the axis of human action: "There is no one who does not love, but he must ask himself what he loves. Let us not encourage not to love, but to choose what we love. But what do we choose, if we are not first chosen? Because we do not love if we are not first loved" (*Sermo*, 34, c. 1, 2).

Love emerges as a necessary foundation for any type of action. One never chooses between loving and not loving, but between the preferences among the different types of love in which liberty is implied, bringing about the *ordo amoris*. The final expression, which seems to present an enigma, involves the foundation of this priority of love that dominates Augustinian thought (Beschin 1983). The matter of choice is placed in relation to a freedom that precedes our own and chooses first; this is the way Saint Augustine breaks with any way of understanding freedom as mere autonomy. For him, it must be understood from the dynamic of love that

precedes and conforms it. He cannot understand it unless it is seen from a preceding end that gives reason to its movement and points to love as its beginning. He begins with the loving experience as a response to knowing we are loved, in order to include this principle in freedom. The pair "being loved-loving," which is presented as something more obvious and fundamental, illuminates the pair "being chosen-choosing," which is harder to understand. In fact, our author draws on the personal strength that the experience of "being loved" gives to man in order to propose it as the base of all human actions. In this way, the act of choosing is rearticulated, with strong biblical roots. The beginning of any choice, which can be referred to as its principal analog, does not entail choosing things. It involves "being chosen" as a person, with the vocational sense he has learned from Sacred Scripture, which has helped him understand the proximity of God to man. Only from the fact of "being chosen," which necessarily requires a first love that gives it meaning, is it possible for us to choose with a true reason that takes love as a fundamental light for life.

It is hard to find, in such a simple sentence, this type of anthropological content, so well-articulated and full of lights that help to comprehend the value of our actions with their personal implication. Our main concern here is to highlight the affective dimension as the mediation between "being loved" and "choosing." The interweaving of affection and liberty can be seen within an interpersonal dimension. Its dynamic character becomes very clear in the fact that, ever since the first moment in which the passive-receptive dimension is predominant, the value of a free response grows until it constitutes human action.

17.3 The Role of Intentionality

In this dynamic process, the love that guides all the other affections is the one that proposes the actions' ends. This is a constant in Saint Augustine that helps him avoid Platonic Intellectualism, which his theory of knowledge seemed to accept. The real ends of actions require an interior movement in order to become a reality. It is never about a merely intellectual apprehension; the reality of *intention* always involves a specific mode of intentionality in which desire, attraction, and knowledge of the loved one are essential.

Our saint will develop the intentional value of affections in a twofold realm. The first is the reality of human action and the end that illuminates it. The second involves virtue, in the sense of building the *ordo amoris* with the primacy of a loving intentionality.

With regard to the intentionality of actions, Saint Augustine will be the great advocate of love as the reality that characterizes the end of any action. He defines a *proper intentionality of love* very differently from one that is simply productive or based on calculating results. Rather, it configures the internal intention that culminates in the truly desired end, beyond the object of attraction.

In his *Commentary on the First Letter of Saint John*, our saint develops this idea to shine light on the understanding of the *morality of human acts*. He does so in order to separate himself from any false and immediate identification with affection without first discerning the diverse value of the different types of love. He says: “The acts of man are not distinguished except by their root of charity. (. . .) Love and do what you want: if you keep silent, keep silent by love; if you cry out; cry out by love; if you correct, correct by love; if you forgive, forgive by love; the root is interior love” (*In Epistola ad Parthos*, VII, 7). In this point, it is important to notice in the expressions the “intimacy-transcendence” dynamic.

In this renowned text, we must highlight the correct translation of the famous expression, “*dilige, et quod vis fac*.” The verb “*fac*” is in the indicative mood and not in the subjunctive; thus, the alleged translation, “love and do as you wish,” so often done in thoughtlessness, is invalid; it ought to be translated as, “love and do what you *want*.” The difference is clear: for Saint Augustine, the act of loving does not justify anything as licit according to our own free loving will (as you wish); rather, it is *effective*, it internally drives man to do one thing over another (do what you want). Ultimately, it gathers the same imperative with which Jesus said in the parable of the Good Samaritan: “do likewise” (Lk 10:37). It is important to understand it as an overcoming of Pelagianism, so that the will may follow an initial affection (mercy, in the Samaritan’s case), in which God’s gift introduces salvation for man. Therefore, it must be interpreted in line with another anti-Pelagian affirmation: “do what you command and command what you wish” (*Confessiones*, I, 10, c. 29, 40). The love that sustains the dynamic of gift becomes the mover and intelligence of human want. The initial freewill is found in God, whose love creates the good, but not in the man who responds to a good that does not create.

The role of the specifically affective mover possesses its own intelligibility: love makes it possible for us to know with the “eyes of faith” (Rousselot 1910), and not with a mere exterior calculation. This knowledge “from the heart” is essential for human action, especially regarding the perception of the end. Thus, this initial dynamic of affection is the base of the *intention* in human action, its fundamental light. All of this leads him to pen an expression regarding the value of human acts that has been greatly accepted: “It has been considered not what one does but with what spirit one does it. For this is the light in us, because the good spirit with which we do what we do is manifested to us: *everything that is manifested is light*” (*De sermone Domini in monte libros duos*, II, 13, 46).

The initial duality we have previously mentioned, and which carries an evident moral connotation, will be the turning point in Saint Augustine’s attempt to resolve the matter of desire with reference to God. “*Propter Deum*” becomes a definition of the will’s rightness, which must respond to the original love that unites it to God as its definitive Good. Yet regarding its initial point, in terms of the movement of the appetite, desire seems to look for its own satisfaction and it can only be loved “*propter me*.” The mere reference to the appetite is not capable of showing the difference, grasped in the paradox of desire, which, by containing a deficiency in search of plenitude, ultimately tends to its own annihilation (Veuthey 1950). The only difference of “*uti*” with respect to “*frui*” as a transcendent end, does not bypass

the issue of what man wants for himself. Such reference to how specific to an end a person must be, is scarcely found in Augustine.

In contrast, it does make itself present as the definition of the converse order, which is the fundamental sign of its relationship with God and sustains the validity of the "*uti-frui*." Its value cannot be restricted to mere appetibility but must open up to the anthropological reality of lovingly uniting oneself to God, which in turn seeks to go beyond this pair (Di Giovanni 1964).

This constitutes an inheritance that will remain throughout the Middle Ages and will reach its first systematization in Saint Bernard, who makes "*propter*," understood in a personal sense, the very specification of love (Saint Bernard 1963). We must refer to this interpretation by the Cistercian monk because of its clear Augustinian roots, for it will help us to better understand implicit aspects in Augustine's thought. As Jean Leclercq has shown with precision, the dynamic that the Cistercian describes comes from the *affective* conception of love (Leclercq 1992). The root of this interpretation lies in the same divine initial presence of loving character and grace; and it is the reason for the entire dynamism he describes in *De diligendo Deo*, as a growing transformation that relies on God's profound movement that attracts man in order to save him. This conviction explains one of his boldest expressions: "Thus, deification is to be affected" (Saint Bernard, 10, 28). We have not erred in our parallel with this inference; on the contrary, it is a great light needed to understand the entire reach of the following text by the holy bishop, in which he describes deification as a process of affection that will lay the foundation for man's salvation: "And since it is necessary for what is loved to affect the lover in itself, it occurs that what is eternal affects the soul with eternity. Hence, in that regard, the happy life is eternal. For, what is eternal that can affect the soul with eternity, if not God?" (*De diversibus quaestionibus LXXXIII*, q. 35, 2).

17.4 Its Necessary Integration Within a Friendship

The central role of divine salvation is thus clear in Saint Augustine's conception of affection, yet we must now explore another aspect we have not addressed directly. In the entire process of affection we have researched, the centrality of the relationship with God is visible, and it is affirmed to the point of overshadowing the entire scope of man's worldly activity, which cannot be presented as the ultimate end nor can it bring about the reality of transformation for man. This reality must be addressed because it refers to the daily aspects of human life, without which a happy life is impossible. It is a field opened by the aforementioned mediation of corporal senses. We cannot conceive it as a formless space sustained by a saving thread to God that keeps us from falling into a chaotic abyss. The idea of *order* is so deeply present in Augustine's mentality that he cannot conceive but a God who creates a good that harmonizes all things. The spiritual order sustained by God must be expressed in an order of material realities that derives from his light.

It is here that *virtue* appears, and our saint conceives it in the context of the four cardinal virtues, an Saint Ambrose's inheritance (Saint Ambrose, *Expositio in Lucam*, V, 62 and *De officiis ministrorum*, I, 27–50). These are still conceived in a Stoic Roman Ciceronian way that does not exclude the role of affections but orders them interiorly. Saint Augustine's novelty of presenting the virtues as the *ordo amoris* is borne here. "Virtue leads us to a happy life, nothing at all can be declared to be a virtue if it is not the love of God. For what is said regarding the four-fold virtue, is said, as I understand it, from the diverse affection of love itself" (*De moribus Ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus manichaeorum libri duo*, I, c. 15, 25).

This specific *order* based on the dynamic of love is above all *integrative*, that is, it is expressed as the conjunction of different affections ordered in a superior intentional direction that proceeds from the divine love by charity. Thus, it is not a matter of a simple juxtaposition of affective movements, but of a real direction to a superior end. Therefore, our saint insists on the founding role of charity, given to him by the *Ambrosiaster*, from which he considers charity "the mother of all goods" (Ambrosiaster; Falanga 1948). The goods proper to human actions allow for the conjunction of all affections in the different human actions at the sight of the ultimate end, which only charity can assure. For Saint Augustine, the new order that charity establishes by leading us to the union with God bears witness to all the virtues as *concrete modes of loving*. He describes the virtues from the dynamic of love, of which they are a specification: "There is nothing better for the greatest good than to love God with one's whole heart, whole soul and whole mind. (. . .) that which preserves from corruption and the impurity of love, and is proper to temperance; that which makes him invincible before all discomforts, and is proper to fortitude; that which makes him renounce all subordination, and is proper to justice; and finally, that which always makes him be on guard to discern things and not let himself be surreptitiously deceived by lie and fallacy, which is proper to prudence" (*De moribus Ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus manichaeorum libri duo*, I, c. 25, 46).

This new integrating dynamic of affections allows virtue to help us act faster, safer, and more joyfully—characteristic features of affections that help us to understand the dynamic of virtue within a journey to happiness.

Nonetheless, the role of human relationships in this process of integration is not clear. The previous doctrine dealing with the "*propter*," which is exclusive with regard to God as the end of upright love, does not help in this respect (*De doctrina Christiana*, III, 10, 16). The "*propter Deum*" defines charity in a way that the role of the neighbor even seems compromised as a mere occasion to love God (*De doctrina christiana*, I, 27, 28). Nevertheless, a deeper evaluation of our author allows us to see the role of *friendship in this intuition*, in which the analogy of love is the way to knowing the Trinity, according to what the famous formula expresses: "You see the Trinity if you see charity" (*De Trinitate*, VIII, 8, 12; Granados 2002). This must be considered the third level of Saint Augustine's thought on affections.

The following step involves the issue regarding the role of man as the end of such volition. According to the first doctrine of the *frui*, man must be loved with a love of *use*. This is an affirmation that will later change, when, in the love of friendship (Macnamara 1961), a friend is considered the end of the act of love.

It also takes us to the path of understanding God, which reaches its climax in *De Trinitate*. There we find a relationship with a trinitarian structure: "Love is from a lover, and with love something is loved. Here are three: the lover, what is loved and love. What is then love, if not a certain life that unites two or that wants to unite them, mainly the lover and what is loved?" (*De Trinitate*, VIII, 10, 14). It is a new path in which personal alterity as such finds its value in a new appreciation of interpersonal relationship and that transcends the mere appetibility that dominated the understanding of the pair *uti-frui* (Nédoncelle 1970). In this itinerary of understanding, the core issue is no longer the problem of evil, but the manifestation of the person through love; mainly, the wonder of becoming a lover and discovering a vast affective world governed by God's salvation. Although this intuition is not sufficiently developed by our author, it suffices to mention it in order to understand its openness to the new riches his flaming heart desired.

17.5 A Global Vision

"They built two cities, two loves: the earthly city, the love for self even to the contempt of God; the heavenly city, the love of God even to the contempt of self" (*De Ciuitate Dei*, XIV, 28). From what we have said, we can now better understand this essential expression by Saint Augustine, from which he builds a first theology of history. The love and mover of the cosmos help us to understand a human history full of greatness and misery, in which the conversion to God and to our own void are always in conflict.

This cannot be seen as a radical dualism, but rather as the internal battle experienced by man. Ultimately, the power of grace is such that victory is guaranteed. God's attraction remains and is capable of saving the one who responds to it. Affections, which touch the innermost part of man, explain all human relationships as well as social and epochal movements.

The globality of the Augustinian vision is such that it is the reason why his doctrine was taken up and reinterpreted time and again as inspiration and reflection regarding that knowledge centered on the *via interioritatis*, which explains the quest that determines our existence. Saint Augustine is a teacher who is able to help us, at the present time, to save affections from a certain enclosed intimacy that does not illuminate life as a whole and does not know how to integrate time, for he leads us to the greatness of knowing about our own identity and about building a story.

All of this under the condition that we learn the enlightening language of affection that allows the lover to enter the innermost part of the loved one to enrich his life. "Give me someone who loves and feels what I say. Give me someone who desires; give me someone who hungers; give me in this solitude a pilgrim who thirsts, who sighs for the font of the eternal homeland; give me someone thus and know what I say. For the evangelist says, 'He whom the Father draws comes to me'" (*In Ioannes Evangelium tr.* 26, 4).

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