

FRIENDSHIP AS ECCLESIAL BINDING:
A READING OF ST AUGUSTINE'S THEOLOGY
OF FRIENDSHIP FROM HIS
IN IOHANNIS TRACTATUS EVANGELIUM

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In honour of
Robert Markus
Amico mihi in Christo

Abstract

This work explores the notion of Augustine's mature theology of friendship as belonging to the body of Christ—the *Ecclesia Catholica*. The *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* provides a unique prism through which to glimpse this settled theology of friends and friendship. Friendship was a central feature of Augustine's life; this work explores how it comes to furnish his notion of membership of the Universal Church. Within the context of the Donatists schism, in which the *Tractatus* is born, Augustine engages with the issues on an ecclesial as well as an emotional level. Within the *Tractatus*, Augustine finds an expedient account of the life of Jesus, which enables him to draw out the notion of the Church (bride of Christ) as bonded to his notion of friendship which is less noticeable from the non-Johannine New Testament canon. Within Augustine's polemic, he reveals and exploits the notion that belonging to the Church is a belonging to the Body of Christ which constitutes the whole Christ (*Totus Christus*) as central to his entire notion of love. Upon this ecclesial foundation, Augustine weaves within it his trinitarian principles which undergird this notion of the Church, in order to appeal to his listeners to value membership and for others to belong. Augustine through this polemic, seeks to enfranchise his listeners in becoming active signs of God's unity on earth as friends of Christ as common members through his own body—the Church.

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Abbreviations

ACW	J. Quaesten and J. C. Plumpe (eds), <i>Ancient Christian Writers</i> (New York, Mahwah: Newman, 1946-).
ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i> , (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1951-)
ATA	Alan D. Fitzgerald, (ed), 1999. <i>Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
AB	<i>Augustine and the Bible</i> [vol 2, based on: <i>Saint Augustine et la Bible</i> , 1986], (Notre Dame: A-M La Bonnardière, ed, P. Bright ed, trans, 1999).
AS	<i>Augustine Studies</i> , (Villanova: Villanova University Press, 1970-)
BA	<i>Bibliothèque Augustinienne</i> (Paris, Desclée, 1949-).
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</i> . (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954-).
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i> .
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> (Vienna, Tempsky, 1865-).
C.Th	Clyde. Pharr, trans. <i>The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions. Corpus Juris Romani 1</i> (1952).
CWA	J. Barnes (ed.), <i>The Complete Works of Aristotle, The Revised Oxford Translation</i> . (2 vols.) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).
EEA	<i>La Collection des Études augustiniennes, Série Antiquité</i>
FC	R. J. Defferrari, et al, (eds.), <i>The Fathers of the Church</i> (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1947-).
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i> .
IEA	<i>Institut d'études augustiniennes</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library.
L&S	Charlton T Lewis and Charles Short. <i>A Latin Dictionary...</i> : Rev. Enl. and in Great Part Rewritten. Oxford University Press, 1963.
NPNF	<i>Nicene and Post-Nicene Father of the Christian Church</i> (Oxford: Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994).
PCW	J. Cooper (ed.), <i>Plato: Complete Works</i> (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).
PL	J. P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina</i> (Paris, 1944-64).
REA	<i>Revue des études augustiniennes et patristiques</i>
RTAM	<i>Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale</i>
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i> . Paris, Editions du Cerf, 1942-
THS	Gillian Clark and Mary Whitby (eds), <i>Translated Texts for Historians series</i> , (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994 -).
WSA	<i>The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century</i> , ed. J. E. Rotelle (New York: New City Press, 1990-)

Referencing System

The referencing system throughout this work for patristic writers are from H. J. Frede, *Kirchenschriftsteller: Verzeichnis und Sigel (Vetus Latina: Die Reste der Altlateinischen Bibel 1/1)* (Freiburg, 1995). For example, in a quotation from Augustine's *Contra Academicos*, it would be referenced as AU Ac. All other referencing is from *Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) Handbook*.

A note on translations: all translations are as per their editions. All translations from the *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* 1-40 are taken from Edmund Hills's translation, WSA, III: 12. Those from 41-124 are taken from NPNF unless otherwise stated. All translations of the *Confessions* are from Henry Chadwick, (1991) *Confessions*, unless otherwise stated.

Ambrose/AM

off	<i>De Officiis</i>	my	<i>De mysteriis</i>
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Augustine/AU

Ac	<i>Contra Academicos</i>	Jo	<i>In Iohannis euangelium tractatus</i>
ba	<i>De Baptismo</i>	Jul	<i>Contra Iulianum</i>
cf	<i>Confessionum</i>	mag	<i>De Magistro</i>
ci	<i>De civitate Dei</i>	ord	<i>De Ordine</i>
conj	<i>De bono conjugali</i>	qua	<i>De animae quantitate</i>
cred	<i>De utilitate credendi</i>	Par	<i>Contra epistulam Parmeniani</i>
Cre	<i>Ad Cresconium grammaticum partis Donati</i>	Pet	<i>Contra litteras Petiliani</i>
Do	<i>Epistula ad Catholicos de secta Donatistarum</i> (<i>De unitate ecclesiae</i>)	Ps	<i>Enarrationes in Psalms</i>
disc	<i>Sermo de disciplina christiana</i>	ps Do	<i>Psalmus contra partem Donati</i>
do	<i>De doctrina christiana</i>	rel	<i>De vera religione</i>
ep	<i>Epistulae</i>	re	<i>Retractationes</i>
Ev	<i>De consensu euangelistarum</i>	reg III	<i>Regula: Praeceptum</i>
Fel	<i>Contra Felicem Manicheum</i>	s	<i>Sermones</i>
fu	<i>Contra epistulam Manichaei quam uocant</i> <i>fundamenti</i>	tri	<i>De Trinitate</i>
Gal	<i>Epistulae ad Galatas expositio</i>	urb	<i>De excidio urbis Romae</i>
Gn li	<i>De Genesi ad litteram</i>	vit	<i>De Beata vita</i>
I Jo	<i>In epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos tractatus</i>		

Cyprian/CY

un	<i>De catholicae ecclesiae unitate</i>	lap	<i>De lapsis</i>
ep	<i>Epistularium</i>		

Jerome/HI

ep	<i>Epistulae</i>	ill	<i>De viris illustribus</i>
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Optatus/OPT

Par	<i>Contra Parmeniarum Donatistam/ Against the Donatists</i> , THS, trans, M. Edwards.
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		Tertullian/TE	
ap	<i>Apologeticum</i>	ba	<i>De baptismo</i>

Additional References

		Aristotle
<i>Eth. nic.</i>	<i>Nichomachean Ethics</i>	

		Cicero
<i>Amic.</i>	<i>De amicitia</i>	<i>Inv. De inventione rhetorica</i>
<i>Rhet. Her</i>	<i>Rhetorica ad Herennium (attributed to Cicero)</i>	<i>De or. De oratore</i>
<i>Off.</i>	<i>De officiis</i>	

		Philo
<i>Det.</i>	<i>Quod deterius potiori insidari soleat</i>	

		Quintilian
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutio oratoria</i>	

Introduction

Friendship today is conceived in different ways to that of Augustine.¹ It is common today that one's best friend is often also the object of one's passionate desires. This kind of romantic dynamic to our current context involving friends and friendships was quite alien to that of the age of Augustine. During the late Roman period, the notion of friendship had already undergone a long and illuminating process of reflection which expressed the norms of late antique culture. Notions of friendship were also highly embedded within an environment of Roman elitism which nestled this most intimate institution of unitive affection within small groups of male luminaries centred upon leisure and debate. Friendship was centred upon these elitist groups of men who gathered in a common interest or cause of which 'agreement' (*consensio*) was a central feature of their unity as friends. They shared a common life together, seeking the same aims and holding the same values whilst seeking a common understanding of life and the world. Of course, such notions are not entirely absent today, yet the major difference being that friendship in the age of Augustine was a socially stratified affair with rigidly prescribed statutes. It was very much the preserve of elite, liberally educated men, devoted to the love of wisdom—or more aptly, the friendship of wisdom '*philosophy*'.²

Like everything else within the social strata of late Roman antiquity, there was a long and ridged criterion for what could be construed as a viable or authentic friendship. Great

¹ For general overviews see McNamara (1958); Lienhard (1990), (1999), *ATA*, 372-373; White (1992), 127-140. More focused works include Gavigan. (1946) 47-58; Fiske. (1962) 127-135; Monagle. (1971), 81-92; McEvoy. (1986) 40-92; van Bavel. (1987), 59-72; Lienhard. (1990) 279-296; Schlabach, (1992) 125-147; Cassidy. (1992a), (1992b); Clark. (1996), 217-226; Sherwin. (1998), 197-214; Rebenich. (2012), 365-374; Kimbriel. (2014); Nawar. (2015), 836-851.

² It must also be noted that *amicitia* was not exclusively a philosophical enterprise. It existed as a dynamic aspect of both social and political cohesion. A good illustration of this dynamic is found in David Balch's article (1997), 123-144.

minds such as Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle had dominated the conversation and had shaped the quest beset by men for centuries.³ In the age of Augustine, the institution of friendship had set within it certain boundaries. Notions such as friendships with women for example, were impossible as any sense of utility rendered the union incidental,⁴ as it was compromised by interests construed as utility. In our modern context, such notions seem strange and unimaginative at best—at worst, backward and patriarchal. Yet, our modern world with its own set of values and ideas clouds us in an unknown and unknowable set of ideals to the classical world. Such ‘clouded’ mists can obscure and provide mirages for the historian in gazing backwards. The ancient world was a world both like and unlike our own. Theirs was a world that was stratified by a rigidly prescribed set of social and ethical norms alien from our own. They lived in a time of great inequality and deprivation beset by unimaginable cruelty and carelessness. Life was fragile, precious and filled with decadence as well as unimaginable death and decay. To many including Augustine, life and love was encircled by a world in constant turmoil. In the Age of Augustine, one could be a noble person of leisure one day and a refugee the next. The widow, Proba, is a good example of the fluidity of circumstance (AU ep 258). Augustine would suffer his fair share of loss and tragedy, as most did in his day. Yet, it was this instability that drove Augustine on to grasp at the security that friendships offered as friends provided an internal ballast against the anxieties of life and death.

³ The classical texts which explore the theme of friendship are Plato’s *Lysis*, which is the first philosophical exploration of the theme in literature. See also Plato’s, *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. The classic works of Aristotle on this theme is, *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics*. An excellent collection of essays is found in, *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, (1997) edited by John T. Fitzgerald. For Plato and friendship, see, Belfiore (2012), 68-108, 198-246.

⁴ See, Aristotle, *Eth. nic.*1156a6-1156a21, (CWA, 1826-7).

Augustine searched, like all of us, for the meaning of life and love.⁵ Love expresses itself within his classical context and finds itself fully expressed in the God who had graced Augustine with a unitive love beyond the temporal and transient nature of life and the created world. In his conversion to Christianity, the idea of God becomes replaced with the reality. This anodising illumination secured love as the essence of his faith, for it had entered his life from above. This moment is the epicentre of Augustine's entire theology of love, for in it, God had embraced him as his own. This of course carried with it a distinct ontological shift in the nature of the embrace. To be bound to created *anima* was one thing, to the Trinity, quite another. Nevertheless, friendship occupied the summit of love's call which binds things together and makes them whole. To be bound within the very life of God, the source of all life and love marked the arrival of one's own *telos*. Augustine had often framed his journey in life as a 'return' or an 'ascent' in which he would find the missing pieces of his life. In many ways we can simply understand friendship within the classical world as fulfilment. This is what Augustine found in Christ, that God had descended in loving friendship toward his creatures and remained with them through his Spirit which was the soul of the Church. Within Christianity, Augustine found the elixir of love's spring, the fountain of eternal friendship, the source of loves eternal embrace. A truly Christian notion of friendship is what Augustine offers within a world seeking to secure itself to that which provides a stable and sustainable

⁵ A note of caution here. The English word 'love' presents us with an etymological maze. The vision of love in the ancient world and to some degree the contemporary, merges for us into many streams and express within a single term, 'love'. In both Greek and Latin, love has a far more precise and descriptive role within both life and literature. In Greek, *agape*, *philia* and *eros* (the three dominant nouns of love) all relate to each other but have different application and denote certain aspect of general as well as facets of love. In Latin, *caritas* relates generally to the Greek term *agape*, which has a specific resonance with the translator's employment of it in LXX as well as its continued and pointed application within the NT corpus. This kind of love (*agape/caritas*) within the biblical material is employed to convey abundance as well as underpinning an ontological character which is rooted within divine activity. *Philia* related broadly to the Latin term *amicitia* and is descriptive of relational ties, in particular friendship. *Eros* is broadly related to passionate love and has Latin connections to *cupitas*. Within the Latin literature we also have *amor*, the verb to-love along with *dilectio* which has a sparser and a more general application.

existence in the world—particularly the Church. Beset by historical intractability and injustice, the Church became for him the means of perfection through the vessel of hope. Like creation itself, this was constantly sustained by the Spirit, through which the love of God provides safe passage through the sea of this world. For Augustine, another way of describing this was presenting the Church as the bride of Christ which gave birth to friends of God. In this sense, the Church was the womb of wisdom through which humanity is returned to God:

For the sake of the kingdom of God, he has to be born of water and the Spirit. If someone is born for the sake of an earthly inheritance from a human father, he has to be born of the physical womb of a mother; but if he is born for the sake of an everlasting inheritance from a father who is God, he must be born of the womb of the Church. A father who will die bears a son to succeed him by his wife; God bears sons by the Church, not to succeed him, but to remain with him.⁶

Friendship was love's crowning glory; it was what love achieved—where it rested. What he found in Christianity was the *caritas Dei* in which he could rest his heart. The Church forged within this love, was where he found his spiritual convalescence, a place of divine befriending. God had made himself what he was in order to make humanity his friends. In Christ he could enter into the eternal love of God and think of himself, by grace, a friend of God, '*et quod amicus dei iustus esse incipit ipse mutatur*'.⁷

As a Christian, Augustine begged the question, 'what greater consolation do we have in this human society, riddled with errors and anxieties, than the unfeigned faith and mutual love of true and good friends?'⁸ In essence, this statement reflects Augustine's vision of the

⁶ AU Jo, 12.5, 232; 'ex aqua et spiritu oportet ut nascatur propter regnum dei. si propter hereditatem patris hominis temporalem nascitur, nascatur ex uisceribus matris carnalis; si propter hereditatem patris dei sempiternam, nascatur ex uisceribus ecclesiae. generat per uxorem filium pater moriturus successurum; generat deus de ecclesia filios non successuros, sed secum mansuros. et sequitur'. (CCSL, 36: 123). See also, AU Jo, 8.4, 11.6-7, 12.2-5.

⁷ AU tri, (CCSL, 50: 227); 'That a just man begins to be called the friend of God means that he changes' (WSA, I: 5) 204.

⁸ AU ci, 19.8 (WSA, I: 7), 362; 'quid nos consolatur in hac humana societate erroribus aerumnisque plenissima nisi fides non ficta et mutua dilectio uerorum et bonorum amicorum?'. (CCSL, 48: 672).

Christian life and that of the Church. Friends bound together in one common community in Christ, ‘*innumerabilis societas sanctorum*’.⁹ Nevertheless, questions that underpinned his religious and philosophical pursuits were always in search of a deeper truth, a wisdom rooted in the pursuit of God’s love. God supplied the answer to many of his most pressing questions concerning love: What it was? Where did it come from? What did it do? All of these questions were bound up with the notion of the meaning of life itself—and ultimately the truth concerning divine beatitude. At the base of those questions belied a great quest, to discover love’s source and to ascend to its summit. As a bishop, Augustine would plead with his listeners that, ‘the ascent is not made by our bodily feet but by the affections of our hearts’.¹⁰

This quest of love and unfailing friendship became ever increasingly embedded with a liturgical and ecclesial framework. This immersion into the role as bishop, was key to his doctrinal development. It provided a prolonged and sustained maturation through the process of preaching the Scriptures and expounding upon the doctrines, ‘agreements’ of the Church. During the time of delivering his anti-Donatist sermons, Augustine proclaimed: ‘Do you want to discern the character of a person’s love? Notice where it leads’.¹¹ All love leads somewhere, some to good things some to the bad, but above all, only true love both comes from God and returns to him. In this sense for Augustine, the Church was the vehicle of love, the ‘way the truth and the life’. Within his preaching *In Iohannis Euangelium Tractatus*¹² Augustine would claim:

⁹ AU Jo, 113.2, (CCSL, 36: 637).

¹⁰ AU Ps, 123.1 (WSA, III: 20), 37; ‘*eandemque adscensionem non corporis pedibus fieri, sed cordis affectibus*’. (CCSL, 40: 1825).

¹¹ AU Ps, 121.1 (WSA, III: 20), 1; ‘*necesse est ducat. sed uis nosse qualis amor sit? uide quo ducat*’. (CCSL, 40: 1801).

¹² The literature on Augustine’s *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* (referred to hereinafter as *Tractatus*/tractates or as AU Jo) is steadily growing and gaining pace. The limited scholarship is due to the relative lack of scholarly attention. See, Milewski (2002), 61-77; Fitzgerald’s ‘Introduction’ to *Homilies on the Gospel of John 1- 40*, trans., E. Hill, WSA III/12 (Hyde Park,

Thus, so that we might also have the means to go, the one we were longing to go to came here from there. And what did he make? A wooden raft for us to cross the sea on. For no one can cross the sea of this world unless carried over it on the cross of Christ.¹³

Later, Augustine clarifies his notion of the Church as the body of believers which constitute that body of which Christ is head:

We find this in scripture; the ark was constructed of timbers that would not rot. The seasoned timbers that will not rot are the saints, the believers who belong to Christ. For just as, in the temple, the faithful are said to be the living stones of which the temple is being built, in the same way those who persevere in the faith are seasoned timbers that will not rot. So then in the ark itself there were such seasoned timbers. The ark, you see, is the Church.¹⁴

Augustine's notion of the Church as a vessel of salvation is clearly presented as an exclusive dwelling for those who are bound together in the body of Christ, secured in the Spirit who binds all; the one through whom true love rests and makes of its members friends of Christ—*amicus Christi*. True love leads to Christ and calls those to rest within his body. For Augustine, all Christians are called to dwell within the unity of the Church, for the 'Holy Spirit is charity'¹⁵, of which those, 'without the Holy Spirit, that is without charity, will be counted as being dead'.¹⁶ For the Church is the dwelling place of the triunity of God.¹⁷ Augustine

2009) 27-33. Fitzgerald deals with several issues relating to the *Tractatus* including the issue of neglect. On the issue of dating, Fitzgerald places the date of tractate six on the date of January 13th 407 A.D. Yet he does stress that the dating of the *Tractatus*, 'remains indicative rather than securely fixed in every detail.' For a more contemporary assessment on the dating of the *Tractatus*, particularly in reference to tractates one-sixteen, see Ployd (2014), 2. Also see, Milewski (2002), 65-69. For the text Augustine was using see Houghton (2008).

¹³ AU Jo, 2.2.

¹⁴ AU Jo, 6.19. See also, Brown (2020).

¹⁵ AU Jo, 9.8.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ AU Jo, 14.9, is a good example of the love of God being the true forger of unity: 'For so great is the charity of the Holy Spirit, so great the unitive force of peace, that when you ask about'. 269.

would call on those Christians separated by schism (Donatists)¹⁸ to come and dwell within the bonds of the Spirit—the Church:

The Spirit being shown in the dove is the same as the Spirit being shown in the tongues. If the Spirit in the dove is the same Spirit as in the tongues, it means the Holy Spirit has been given to the whole world, from which you have cut yourself off, with the result that you clamor with the crow instead of moaning with the dove. Come therefore.¹⁹

Love united everything and none more so than the love of God.²⁰ From the rancorous and tiresome history of the intractability of the Donatist schism,²¹ Augustine in his preaching

¹⁸ Throughout this work I shall refer to the two groups as ‘Catholics’ and ‘Donatists’. Because of the opprobrious nature specifically of the term, ‘Donatist’, I shall continue with those terms simply for clarity of understanding. Others have discarded the terms Catholic in favour of ‘Caecilianists’ (Catholics). The naming of each other was in Augustine’s day, a flashpoint of contention as each sought to deprive the other of validity (For example, see *Gesta Collationis Carthagenensis* 3.30-4). Nevertheless, I have despite being justification not to, remain with the traditional terms. On the difficulty of names see, Hoover (2018), 18-24.

¹⁹ AU Jo, 6.15.

²⁰ See, (n15) AU Jo, 14.9.

²¹ The Donatist Church, which Augustine refers to as a party (*pars*), was born out of the persecution of the Church prior to the act of toleration by Constantine (313 AD). The context of North African Christianity is quite distinct within the western Roman world. It had its own language (Punic) and culture and in general saw itself as both separate and superior. In terms of its Christianity, it valued the Scriptures and its saints with great intensity and fervour. The veneration of its martyrs captures this intensity, as to give up one’s life for the faith in response to persecution seems to have been expected. It thrived on the stories of the martyred saints such as Felicity and Perpetua—of which none was more elevated than the great Cyprian the martyred bishop of Carthage (258 AD). In 311 AD Caecilian was elected to be the bishop of Carthage, the ecclesiastical capital of north west Africa. His election was contested due to allegations he had been consecrated by a *traditor*. Those who had conspired with the Roman persecution of Christians or had handed over church property, particularly the Scriptures and sacramental vessels were labelled *traditors*, those who had ‘handed over.’ For Donatists this act of betrayal rendered one’s faith invalid and rendered oneself dispossessed of the gift of the Holy Spirit, rendering one’s ability, particularly bishops, unable to impart the Spirit. For this reason, Caecilian was rejected and Majorinus was elected as an acceptable replacement. This unfortunate episode represents the epicentre of the split; Catholics remained faithful to Caecilian’s election, the remainder with Majorinus. The second bishop elected to head the now schismatic movement was Donatus Casae Nigrae, after which the schism was named. The secondary literature is longstanding and well established. See, Frend (1985); Tilley (1997), (2011), 21-32; (1996); Hermanowicz, (2008); Shaw (2011); Evers (2012), 375-385; and a collection of invaluable essays in, *The Donatist Schism*, (2018) [R. Miles, ed, first published, 2016], THS.

on John called all to come and rest, to focus upon Christ and become friends with one another through the body of the bridegroom. Augustine's theology of the Church as the locus of the trinitarian economy of salvation was a contentious issue. Notions of what constituted the Church was not understood in the same way between Donatist and Catholics alike. Even within our modern context, we must appreciate how sensitive North African Christians were at this time over questions as to the nature of the true Church. Where it was claimed to be? What constituted it? Above all, who possessed it? Augustine understood the power of love to overcome differences and what friendship meant to those in his age. Friendship was a prize beyond measure, a pearl beyond price. With God, for most—unimaginable. What Augustine is doing in his preaching within the first sixteen *Tractatus* is bypassing the history of separation through which he reveals his fully developed notion of friendship as ecclesial. It also enables us to glimpse the pastoral preacher at work in seeking to heal divisions with the love of God, encouraging them to rest in Christ. To focus upon being his friends and through him, friends with one another. What Augustine does with friendship, is to display its summit; to move people beyond the past onto the celestial horizon of God's glory, which is the fulfilment of faithful friendship.

In terms of teleology, Augustine provides a window into the Western wisdom of the Church in late Roman antiquity. The questions for him as it was for most in the ancient world was: What was the way to our fulfilment? What shaped and held meaning in its embrace beyond the world? The answer friendship—for Augustine, a man of elite status, this was its summit. For him, friendship represented the resting place of love both earthly and heavenly. Only the wise sought the comfort of friendship forged in *caritas* rather than concupiscence. He would discover the *telos* of Cicero's maxim: '*Est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium divinarum*

humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio,²² within the embrace of the Catholic Church, which rested within the intimate *sinu* of Christ (*Erat ergo recumbens unus ex discipulis eius in sinu Iesu, quem diligebat Iesus*).²³ From his Catholic conversion onwards, the search for the source and summit of love and true friendship becomes ever increasingly embedded and ecclesialised within the notion of Christ and the Church as the *totus Christus* (The Whole Christ).²⁴

Within this work, we explore the theme of friendship in relation to his understanding of the Church and how through the Church one participates within the life of the triune God which envelops its members within the Spirit, binding all in all, making his members friends by divine participation. This notion of binding was a central feature of his understanding of *religio*, is closely associated within his etymology with *religare*, ‘to tie back’. On the nature of true religion, he states:

It is (the free will of the soul) a gift coming from the Lord of all creation, who is wise and whose power cannot be made to yield. But to see these things as they should be seen is given to only a few, and no one is rendered fit for this except

²² Cicero, *Amic*, ‘For friendship is nothing else than an accord in all things, human and divine, conjoined with mutual goodwill and affection’. (LCL, 6: 20) 130-1.

²³ Vg, Jn. 13:23. Augustine also delivers an extended exposition on the notion of *sinus* (Gk κόλπον) in (AU Jo, 3.17). This description of John the evangelist as resting in the *sinu* of Christ which he treats in AU Jo, 16.2; ‘since he was drinking it from the Lord’s breast. John the evangelist, you see, is the one among all the disciples who reclined on the Lord’s breast, the one for whom the Lord, while owing all of them his love, loved more than the rest’ mirrors his use of this phrase expounded upon Jn 1:18 (*filius qui est in sinu patris, ipse enarrauit*) which Hill rightly translates from ‘in secreto patris’ as an ‘inner council’. Augustine recognises a correlation between these two passages in which the intimacy, ‘inner council’ that Jesus shares with the father is extended through His body to those who dwell intimately within His life.

²⁴ Augustine’s theology of the Church as described in as *totus Christus* is well known. By this he means, that the Church is the body on Earth which remains joined through the Spirit to its head—Christ (Col 1:18). This term is intrinsic to his notion of how and why the Church remains the sole sanctuary of salvation on earth. See, Cameron (2005); Ployd (2014a); Grabowski (1957), 29-63 and Burnaby (1938), 100-3. For some of Augustine’s use of the term and related terms see, AU Jo 3.4, AU Jo 28.1; AU Ps. 17.2, 30,2,1,3; 54.3; 56.1; AU Do, (2)2.

by true religion. And true religion is that by which the soul binds itself again to the one and only God²⁵

Augustine's tractates on John, provide a unique prism through which Augustine's notion of *religio* is deployed through the prism of friendship in relation to divine befriending as *Ecclesial* indwelling. Friendship, for Augustine was such an elevated institution which dovetails with John's account of the gospel. In this regard John's gospel in many regards is unique. Through this account of the gospel Augustine is able to present his vision of friendship, building upon his classical understanding of friends and friendship as an exalted summit of love, which is embodied as the Church, the inner chamber of God's love and knowledge (Jn 15:15). Nevertheless, it is mistakenly assumed that Augustine was a man who held sacred Scripture to be the highest authority, he did not. Nothing was more authoritative than the Church and without the participation within the Church nothing had any authentic validity, 'But there was a firm place in my heart for the faith, within the Catholic Church, in your Christ'.²⁶ Later on within the same book he would write, 'by your scriptures commended by the authority of your Catholic Church, you have provided a way of salvation whereby humanity can come to the future life after death'.²⁷ Augustine did not preach Scripture—he preached the Church. Without the Church the *scriptum* of his community was read without the grace of God and was thus a dead letter. His notion of understanding Scripture was woven together with his belonging to the Catholic Church: 'In truth, I would not have believed the

²⁵ AU qua, 80 (ACW, 9), 110; 'datum est enim a sapientissimo atque inuictissimo totius creaturae domino. sed ista, ut uidenda sunt, uidere paucorum est neque ad hoc quisquam nisi uera religione fit idoneus. est enim religio uera, qua se uni deo anima, unde se peccato uelut abruperat, reconciliatione religat'. (CSEL, 89: 230). See also, AU rel, 113.

²⁶ AU cf, 7.7, 116; 'stabiler tamen haerebat in corde meo in catholica ecclesia fides Christi tui'. (CCSL, 27: 97).

²⁷ AU cf, 7.11, 119; 'atque scripturis sanctis, quas ecclesiae tuae catholicae commendaret auctoritas, uiam te posuisse salutis humanae ad eam uitam, quae post hanc mortem futura est'. (CCSL, 27: 100).

gospel unless the authority of the Catholic Church prompted me'.²⁸ Augustine also states that the Church is the only body of Christianity that can faithfully transmit its message.²⁹ As Bishop he became a sacred Orator,³⁰ Scripture was his manual, but the Church was his religion. Only within it was true fulfilment found in the embrace of Christ as servants who are made friends (Jn 15:15).

General Scholarship and Methodology

The topic of friendship in Augustine is a well-trod path. In many ways this has been more of a hindrance than a help, as too much has been assumed concerning the scholarship on this topic. Because this has been such a widely held view, scholars have shied away from working on this theme in Augustine, often assuming that what has been said, is all that there is to say. It is also an observation that much of this research that has been conducted prior to this work has had an overbearing focus upon Augustine's notion of friendship in terms of distilling it for its illumination on the Classical world or philosophical insights and influences. Few works of the theme of friendship in Augustine approach it from a theological perspective. All too often the emphasis has been driven by a prevailing fashion in Augustinian studies which have been overly dominated by philosophical enquiry rather than theological concerns

²⁸ AU fu, 5.6 (trans, mine); 'ego uero euangelio non crederem, nisi me catholicae ecclesiae conuinceret auctoritas'. (CSEL, 25: 1.197).

²⁹ AU Jo, 109.1.

³⁰ By the time Augustine enters the Church there had been, since the time of Constantine an exponential rate at which the offices of state became porous to the high ecclesial offices of the Church. Orators and those schooled within the liberally educated luminaries were 'Marked men' for Clerical office. There is an array of example from the third to fourth century of those who were elected to the bishopric from such backgrounds. See, Brown (2020). See also, Harrison (2013), 47-49. See also, Cameron (1991), 120-154.

in general. In terms of friendship this is clearly the case, which is reflected in most of the general scholarship.

Several works have made significant contributions to the study of friendship in Augustine since the publications of Marie Aquinas McNamara's, *Friends and Friendship for Saint Augustine*, in 1957. In many ways, this now dated work, remains a standard text in this field of study and it remains the most comprehensive study to date. It presents itself along with other works as a general overview of the thought of friends and friendship in Augustine. Others works however, stand out as worthy of special mention. Caroline White's, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century*, is a sweeping assessment of key figures for whom friendship stands out as a particularly important theme. She highlights their respective and distinctive views that shape the general vision of friends within the Church of the fourth century. Her chapter entitled, 'St Augustine', offers a concise, detailed, and penetrating assessment of Augustine's vision of friendship from a classicist perspective. This angle has limited scope and offers little in terms of the theology nuances and doctrinal content of Augustine's developing notion of friendship. More focused works within this perspective such as John Monagle's 'Friendship in St. Augustine's Biography' as well as Tarcisius van Bavel's 'The influence of Cicero's ideal of friendship on Augustine,' as well as others, offer specific studies of the classical notions found within the writings of Augustine. Very few works with a focused theological angle emerge or even exist. However, there are a few. Stefan Rebenich's essay, 'Augustine on Friendship and Orthodoxy' stands out as an insightful and scintillating read in this regard. Rebenich demonstrates the relationship between Augustine and Jerome in terms of how friendship is affected by doctrine and dispute. This is a significant contribution for the following reason. 1). It draws out and establishes the link between doctrinal, *consensio* and friendship within the framework of membership of the Church. 2). It underscores how and why heresy constitutes a rupture in unity within the Church which one can identify under the umbrella of 'agreement'. This agreement is, as I shall argue, a fundamental aspect of

Augustine's understanding of ecclesial friendship. In underscoring this notion of 'agreement', Rebenich's research dovetails with this reading which comes at the issue of friendship from a perspective of belonging. Nevertheless, what Rebenich demonstrates is that even within the Church, Augustine regarded 'agreement' as a sign of being a true friend of Christ as opposed to those who simply appear to be; doctrine being so closely tied to the Church as Christ's body as the place of relationship and revelation. Augustine would see all heretics as well as schismatics within this mental framework of belonging and Catholic *consensio*.

This leads me to the most pressing point in terms of scholarship of which I have alluded to. The field of study concerning the theme of friendship in Augustine has been dominated by a preoccupation of distilling the works of Augustine and analysing them with an overbearing emphasis of utilising them as a window through which we peer into the world of late antiquity. This prism expresses itself through the classical scholars which pours through into the well-established pattern of limiting Augustine to a philosopher of the later Roman period, and often touching upon, but not exploring the theological dimensions of his thought. Of course, this is not the complete picture, yet one does detect this 'pattern' throughout the sifting of the secondary material on Augustine and friendship. In terms of the theme of friendship, this 'pattern' is clearly observable. Conscious of this, my treatment of the text of the *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus*, aims to explore more fully his notion of friendship within a theological framework which expresses itself in an ecclesiological dimension. I am not the first to mention that Augustine ties friendship to the *ecclesia*, but I am, the first to qualify it in a substantial way and provide an in-depth analysis. Scholars in general often reference *ecclesial* friendship with a certain lack of attention or focus. A good example of this is in Caroline White's chapter on 'Augustine', in which she touches briefly upon Augustine's theology of ecclesial friendship within his broader dynamics of his thoughts on friendship. She states: 'As Augustine explained to Felicia in *epistula* 208, it is common

membership in the body of Christ which brings Christian friends so close together.’³¹ However, the issue is illustrated by the fact that when probing further, *epistula* 208 does not mention friendship. Therefore, the evidence is generally vague and the argument rather unsupported.³² There is only one piece that stands out as having surveyed the landscape of my area of research. This is Michael Sherwin’s article, ‘The Friends of the Bridegroom Stands and Listens’ An Analysis of the Term *amicus sponsi* In Augustine’s Account of Divine Friendship and the Ministry of Bishops’.³³ Sherwin’s focus is upon divine friendship as a

³¹ White (1992), 208. See also, McNamara (1958), 232.

³² White’s assertion without sufficient demonstration is not the only example of this. Monagle (1971), states that ‘all true friendships...must be rooted in Christ’ and that ‘It is Christ, “the Way, the Truth, and Life” who purifies the whole man and cleanses friendship’, 86. In the final part of the article (92) he relates friendship to the mystical body, the ‘totus Christus’ (see below) citing AU ci, 13.23, which contains this theme: *ut cum illis sit unus Christus, uelut caput et corpus*, and relates it to Augustine, *In epistulam Iohannis ad Parthos tractatus*, which cements the notion of universal ‘holy fellowship’ (AU I Jo, 10.3). What is notably absent from these citations from Augustine, for both White (1992) and Monagle (1971), is that the cited texts underpin the notion of belonging to the *totus Christus*, but how it is related to friendship is not substantiated within those texts. McEvoy (1986) does link friendship with Augustine’s new innovation in Monastic life being ‘a microcosm of the Church’ (86) yet what constitutes the friendship is intimate communal life in which the life of the small group of friends is founded upon ‘agreement’ on purpose and equality. What this work, as well as previous published articles that have been produced demonstrate, is how Augustine displays his notion of the ‘Mystical Body’ as a place of salvific friendship and how the gap between friendship and the Mystical Body is demonstrably bridged and displayed. This work’s focus is upon the dwelling within the Church which constitutes and forges friendship with God. Through indwelling ‘agreement’ grows. The Church is the place in which friendship is constituted and cultivated within the spiritual life of the one whose foundation the Church rests upon—Christ and thus the Trinity.

³³ As I have noted elsewhere; ‘This illuminating article teases out much of the meaning behind the figure of John the Baptist as the *amicus sponsi* in showing that for Augustine John represents an image of an ‘ideal’ faithful Catholic bishop. Though Sherwin rightly sees the focus of this approach in employing John as the ideal Catholic bishop, he largely ignores the inference to those who ‘stand and listen’ as the main object of this imagery particularly in that those words are addressed to the congregation. They do not reflect Augustine’s special status as an elevated representative—a special friend above others. Thus, the general ‘listener’, Augustine’s congregants, are expressly the focus of being another *amicus sponsi*. Sherwin’s focus is narrow in applying friendship to special representatives i.e. Catholic Bishops. However, Augustine’s delivery is broad and although this term does in some sense have a ‘narrow’ reading, in that bishops are the examples, they also clearly have a much ‘broader’ application that goes beyond those who minister as bishops and teachers. Also, the image of John falls within a matrix of other biblical tropes which interlock with each

means by which God communicates his will to the world through those who are called to be His friends. These friends as Sherwin highlights, are the Prophets such as Abraham who communicate to God's people, leading them into the Kingdom. As he states, 'Thus, the prophet knows "the story of God's works", because the prophets are "friends of God"'.³⁴ He builds the case that the Apostles are the friends of the New Covenant and therefore continue in that sacred ministry. This, in the context of the Donatist schism finds its expression in Augustine's sermons as a call to 'listen' to only those who are God's friends i.e. Catholic Bishops. Using the illustration of John the Baptist who Augustine refers to as simply the '*amicus sponsi*', he draws a figurative connection between the figure of John and himself. Sherwin states that for Augustine:

The term friendship with God offered Augustine a powerful and easily understood analogy for explaining the apostolic ministry and the community of the Church. It was powerful because the Donatists themselves employed spousal imagery to defend their views.³⁵

Yet Sherwin's angle is significantly different from mine, as his notion of friendship with God is predicated upon a select few (bishops) who make known the will of God. Sherwin bases his notion of friendship not on belonging to the *ecclesia* but on exposing oneself to the authority of God's Bishops—his friends. Thus, divine friendship for Sherwin is embedded in the alignment of 'wills' and the exchange and proclamation of the knowledge of God's love. The '*amicus sponsi*' is simply a, 'helpful model for understanding the Christian pastor's vocation to care for Christ's flock'.³⁶ Friendship for Sherwin is also unperfected as it is predicated upon grace and only completed in the saints in heaven. While I accept many of his

other. The image of John therefore sits amongst these and as I have argued embodies most fully the image of unitive love for all who are called to be 'seasoned timbers,' friends of Christ. Brown (2020). n37.

³⁴ Sherwin (1998), 199.

³⁵ Sherwin (1998), 214.

³⁶ Sherwin (1998), 198.

arguments, this work is a broader and more embedded focus upon friendship belonging to all who find unity within the Church and that its foundation is based upon indwelling rather than knowledge. Sherwin's is more philosophically focused and embedded within the classical norms of friendship rather than this work, which roots the forging of friendship within the Body of the Church constituted by the indwelling Spirit which binds all in all. In this regard, Sherwin's work aligns itself very neatly with Adam Ployd's notion of moral epistemology (see below). In many ways however, this work draws together Sherwin's initial understanding of 'divine friendship' into a broader and ecclesial construction. I utilise the works of Ployd which grounds the notion of ecclesial binding within the body of Christ as an institution of the trinitarian economy of love. Friendship in this work finds in Ployd's work its theological footing in which it becomes embedded within. Since Sherwin's reading of divine friendship more focused and illuminating works have appeared.

These significant works have been steadily emerging in recent years highlighting and exploring the theological dimension of Augustine's anti-Donatist sermons, of which this work is very much indebted to. The work of Ployd, as noted above has been instrumental in preparing much of the theological groundwork which has facilitated how the notion of friendship dovetails with Augustine's theology of the *ecclesia* and of how the Church is both forged and sustained by the loving life of the Trinity itself.³⁷ Ployd de-nucleates these anti-Donatist sermons, of which the *Tractatus* holds a central position, exposing the trinitarian substructure to Augustine's theological notion of the nature of the Church as Christ's one true body of believers. It is this 'indwelling' that Ployd describes as the spiritual nexus which unified believers within the Trinity and are drawn towards and transformed into the

³⁷ Ployd (2015), 57-77; (2014a) 253-264; (2014b) 519-540.

community of God, governed by love and trained in the art of moral truth which he describes as ‘moral epistemology’.³⁸

On this point this work builds upon those foundations laid by Ployd as well as those of the other ‘New Canon’ scholars such as Rowan Williams, Michael Barnes, Lewis Ayers, and Michael Cameron. These scholars are much more sensitive to the theological dimension of Augustine as a preacher and expositor of Scripture. In terms of friendship, this work explores Augustine’s deployment and doctrine of friendship in terms of, 1). What were friends and what forged friendship? 2). What were the developments and theological foundations of it? 3). Why and how it became applicable to his Pro-Nicene theology and the nature of the *ecclesia* in the face of schism? 4). Finally, how it helped him shape and re-forge a future of a community founded upon the love of God which called its members into the fellowship of Christ?

This work approaches these questions by a methodology of qualitative distillation of the material, beginning with an assessment of the primary and secondary material on the theme of friends and friendship in general. This was then coupled with a second phase of the assessment by focusing upon the *Tractatus* in order to mine the text for, 1). References to

³⁸ In terms of ‘moral epistemology’ Ployd describes the cultivation of Augustine’s listeners in order to train them in the art of love and humility. He pays special attention to the connection between knowledge and love as a way of ‘teaching’ his listeners to recalibrate their moral compass in order to move them towards eternal and immaterial aims. In essence the first book of Augustine’s *de Trinitate* is instrumental in providing a framework for this moral training in which the Trinity becomes the goal of faith. From within this matrix, the Church becomes a locus of divine activity and the source of effective growth in moral matters through knowledge. In essence he states: ‘By “moral epistemology” I mean Augustine’s account of how we advance in knowledge of God through the reformation of our desires’. Ployd qualifies this that he means this in a general rather than a mechanical or technical sense. I will refer this throughout the work as it meshes with, as Ployd notes, ‘is uniquely accessible through his sermons because the primary goal of his preaching is the training of souls’. Throughout this work, this notion of Ployd remains in the background to my reading of the *Tractatus* as it dovetails with my exploration of the theme of friendship as a prize and privilege of belonging to the unity of Catholic Christianity. See, Ployd (2015), 18-55.

Friends and friendship, 2). Identifying the major locations of its deployment. This was then followed up by a re-reading of the material in order to process it into a coherent strand of thought, through which the dominant theme of friendship emerged from within the *Tractatus*.³⁹ The material displays a concentration of the use of *amicitia/amicus* towards the earliest tractates, which is often loaded with biblical phrases relating to friends and friendship. For example, Augustine within the first grouping of the *Tractatus* (1-16), will dwell on certain terms and phrases such as the title of John the Baptist ‘*amicus autem sponsi*’ (Jn. 3:29). Or even importing biblical references from outside the Gospel of John such as: ‘*Moses used to talk with the Lord, one opposite the other, like a friend with his friend*’ (Ex 33: 11). Nevertheless, this has often proved fruitful as it indicates Augustine’s ideals of how friendship applies to the issue of the *ecclesia*. Before progressing further, we briefly need to focus upon the tractates and why they present themselves as uniquely indispensable in drawing out Augustine’s notion of the Church as the exclusive place of Christian friendship.

In Iohannis Euangelium Tractatus

³⁹ All of the *Tractatus* has been distilled for the theme of friendship. This is a list of tractates the research focused upon in more depth: **1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6** (1-3, 6-17, 20-21); **7** (1-5, 7-10, 13-14, 16, 19, 23,24); **8** (3-5, 12); **9** (1,2,5, 7-10, 13, 16); **10** (1-3, 5-9, 11-13); **11** (1-6, 8, 10-12, 14); **12** (1-2, 9, 13, 14); **13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18** (1-1-2, 4, 7, 10-12); **19** (1-3, 5, 8, 10-14, 18-20); **20** (1-3, 8-13); **21; 22** (7-9); **23; 24** (1-2); **25; 26; 27; 28** (1,6-12); **29** (3-6,7); **30; 31** (4,5,8-11); **32; 33** (4); **34; 35** (1-6); **36** (1,3-5); **37** (1,2,4,5,7); **38** (1,2,5,6,8,11); **39** (1,2,4,5,8); **40** (1,4-6,8-11); **41** (1,2,8,10-13); **42** (5,16); **43** (5-7,9,12); **44; 45** (1,2,9,12,14,15); **46; 47** (1,2,11,14); **48** (1,4,7,10-12); **49; 50** (2,6,11,12); **51** (1,3,4,7,10,11-13); **52** (2,6,8,14); **53** (7,8); **54** (4,6-8); **55**. The term *amicitia* is twice used and is designated by the †. *Dilectio* is included as context denotes its translation as friendship or fellowship, it is designated by*. The *tractates* on which friend/friendship/fellow/fellowship is explicitly mentioned or alluded to: **3** (17); **4** (1,9); **5** (17,19), **6** (23); **7** (2,5,8,10); **9** (13); **10** (9,11); **12*** (2); **13** (2,10,11,2,13,14,16); **14** (1,2,9); **15** (12*, 33*); **16** (30*); **18** (1*,7*); **19** (14); **21** (17); **23** (2,11); **25** (17); **26** (17*); **27** (11*); **30** (1,7); **32** (2); **34** (10); **39** (1*,5*); **41** (1,11); **46** (3,8†); **49** (9,11); **55** (2,5); **57** (3); **79** (2); **77** (5); **85** (1-3†); **101** (2); **109** (2); **110** (4,6); **116** (7).

John Burnaby in his great work wrote: ‘If all the works of Augustine were lost but his *Expositions of the Psalms* and his *Homilies of John*, we should still possess all we needed for a reconstruction of his personal religion’.⁴⁰ Within these two works we have the clearest prism with which to peer into the soul of the man. Augustine was, before anything else, a preacher. During his episcopacy, rarely would have a day gone by without some form of instruction, usually in the form of a homily. He was a singularly driven man who was consumed by his vocation to communicate his truth. From the very outset of his conversion, we know that he imbibed the Scriptures. Indeed, his conversion is centred upon them—*tolle lege*. At the same time his authority in the Scriptures was qualified by his adherence to Catholic Christianity (AU cf, 7.11). They were also the primary source of his rejection of the Catholic Church. They belonged to each other. The Scriptures were at the heart of his faith through which Christ as *magister* enlightened the faithful. In this sense, Augustine understood his vocation as an instrument of Christ within his body. In this regard, he stands in a well-established pattern of highly educated men, wedded to the norms of Roman rhetoric. In Augustine’s day, high numbers of Bishops began life as either orators or liberal arts luminaries. Some like Ambrose, were State officials and entered the Church in a time of advancing integration between both empire and *ecclesia*. Most of the interlocutors Augustine debated with, shared a formation as cultivated intellectuals in possession of an arsenal of weaponised communicative skills. Most of these highly educated elites, were men who entered into the ministry of the Church and in effect became, sacred orators. Men who plied their trade in the pursuits of the Church rather than Roman officialdom.

The Scriptures become for Augustine the summit of *scriptum*, worthy of the title, sacred. Within the canon of *sanctum scriptum* there was a hierarchy of voice. Within this, the gospel of John seems to have been at the pinnacle of his opinion:

⁴⁰ Burnaby, (1938), x.

I am certainly not mistaken—the evangelist saw better than I do what he was saying; he saw the truth better than I can, since he was drinking it from the Lord’s breast. John the evangelist, you see, is the one among all the disciples who reclined on the Lord’s breast, the one for whom the Lord, while owing all of them his love, loved more than the rest.⁴¹

Sometime between December 406 and June 407 Augustine delivered his first sixteen tractates on John (AU Jo), ten tractates on the *First Epistle of John* (AU I Jo) as well as the *Psalms of Ascent* (AU Ps).⁴²

The Trinity and the Church

Throughout this work, the interlacing between Augustine’s understanding of the Church rests upon his ‘Pro-Nicene trinitarianism’. Here I am very much following in the furrows forged

⁴¹ AU Jo, 16.2, 298; ‘sed ni fallor, immo quia uerum est, et non fallor, melius enim quam ego, uidit euangelista qui diceret, melius me ueritatem uidebat, qui eam de pectore domini bibebat. ipse est enim Iohannes euangelista, qui inter omnes discipulos super pectus domini discumbibat, et quem dominus caritatem debens omnibus, tamen prae ceteris diligebat. (CCSL, 36: 165).

⁴² Both La Bonnardière (1965) and Berrouard (1971) represent the two most significant contributors in motioning the dating towards our current consensus. Deferrari (1917) was the first to propose the production of the corpus over a number of years (416-418) as it was previous thought they were delivered in a single year (c416). Their work builds upon Zarb (1933), who was the first to propose their composition into two separate periods AU 1-54 in 413 and AU Jo, 55-124 in 418 (50-110). Le Landais (1953) proposed a variation on this AU Jo, 1-27 between 414-5 and AU Jo, 28-54 separately along with AU Jo, 55-124 in 416. The current consensus which has developed from both Bonnardière and Berrouard, which is generally agreed upon is that AU Jo, 1-16 (Jn 1-4) was preached between December 406 to June 407. La Bonnardière was the first to place AU Jo, 1-12 within those dates which was accepted by Berrouard. Therefore, consensus from Berrouard onwards was that the AU Jo, 1-12 were preached from December 406-June 407 and AU Jo, 13-16 between 407-408. He also placed AU Jo, 17-19 and AU Jo, 23-54 between 413-416, and 55-124 in late 419. He also accepted that AU Jo, 20-22 was a later insertion around 418-9, following Wright (1964). Nevertheless, the current consensus is that of AU Jo, 1-16 were preached between December 406-June 407. Yet, as Allan Fitzgerald stresses in his ‘Introduction’ to the most current translation of the first 40 tractates (WSA III: 12) that the dating of the AU Jo, ‘remains indicative rather than securely fixed in every detail, (29). The most comprehensive and accessible assessment is Milewski (2002), 65-69. See also Fitzgerald (2017). With a particular focus upon the anti-Donatist sermons dating (AU Jo 1-16), see Ployd, (2014), 2. For the text Augustine was using see Houghton (2008).

by others.⁴³ By ‘Pro-Nicene trinitarianism’ I mean that at the heart of Augustine’s notion of what constitutes the Church is that of the irreducibility, inseparability, and simplicity of God. It is these features which underscore the Church’s salvific existence as a result of the divine activity and of the ontological exchange between the Trinity within which the Church was nestled. The foundational forging of which is created in through the act of the incarnation, which makes possible the matrix of this activity. Through the Church, the unknown and unknowable God, becomes indelibly linked to the created order through which the Spirit remains, as the *religio* of Creator and creation. Within the *Tractatus*, with its theological focus upon the incarnation (Jn 1:14), provides Augustine with a foundational hermeneutical locus of his Pro-Nicene trinitarianism as a premise for his *ecclesia* polemic. The activity of the Trinity underpins and preserves the character of the Church in a sea of sin (*est uniuersa generis humani massa damnata*).⁴⁴ This sanctifying character is imputed upon its members through the reciprocal participation as members of the inseparable activity of the Godhead. Through the indelibility of the *totus Christus* which is bound within the Spirit of Father and Son, the members are made participants by grace. Nevertheless, this does not equate to what we may leap towards as a proto ‘trinitarian ecclesiology’ comparable to models proposed by some modern commentators upon the nature of the Church and the Trinity.⁴⁵ I wish

⁴³ Lewis Ayres and Michael Barnes have been instrumental in rehabilitating Augustine’s contribution to ‘Pro-Nicene Trinitarianism’. Notable works are, Barnes, (1995), Ayres (2000); (2004), 364-383; (2010); (2011), Ployd (2014), 3-11.

⁴⁴ AU ci, 21.12, (trans, mine); ‘The whole mass of humanity is condemned’. (CCSL, 48: 778). See also, AU Jul, 6.2.

⁴⁵ By ‘trinitarian ecclesiology’, I am referring to the modern phenomena, which Ployd himself draws attention to in contemporary systematic theology. Its focus being that of seeing the Trinity as a model for the Church as a community. Such notions have been the revisionist assessment of seeing the Pro-Nicene theologies of East and West as representing a distinct and separate tradition. This reading often sets the Latin West, under the influence of Augustine, as slipping into semi-Sabellianism, or insufficiently trinitarian and invariably presenting the Eastern tradition (particularly that of the Cappadocians) as a more faithful and authentic to the traditions of Nicene and of its ecclesiological inferences. For notable proponents of what has been described as a ‘New Orthodoxy’ otherwise known as the ‘trinitarian revival’ are: Moltmann (1981); Zizoulas (1985), (2008); LaCunga (1991); Boff (1998); Volf (1998). These commentators represent the core of this new movement which

at this point to echo the warnings of Ployd on this matter: ‘The phrase ‘trinitarian ecclesiology’ suggests an anachronistic application of a fairly recent theological phenomenon’.⁴⁶ This requires a brief rejoinder.

Within the later part of the twentieth century systematic theologians, sought a new framework for the life of the Church within its post war context. This largely was the result of their experience and background within a world that had experienced untold division and violence and injustice born out of national and political idealisms which pervaded western European countries. The project of ‘trinitarian ecclesiology’ was a response to the issues of Christian identity within a framework of pluralism—of which socialism became a noticeable feature of this new vision of Church and society. It was within this matrix that notions of the Trinity became a basis for equality and diversity. In this sense, the perichoretic indwelling of the distinct *hypostases/persona* became a doctrinal model for a new vision of the *Ecclesia Catholica*.⁴⁷ The project has had a major impact upon the systematic theology of the late twentieth century. Yet it has been far from universally accepted. It has been significantly challenged for drawing the Trinity into a framework of human social modelling. This ‘New Orthodoxy’, as it has been described, has now largely been rejected.⁴⁸ One of the most prominent proponents of this ‘New Orthodoxy’ is Leonardo Boff. He has been one of the most vocal and influential writers on drawing parallels between the inner life

enjoyed widespread attention, most notable amongst popular readerships. However, since the beginning of the twentieth century scholars have steadily and summarily exposed the theological problems and the miss-appropriations of patristic sources as supportive. Works such as Peters (1993).

⁴⁶ Ployd (2015), 4.

⁴⁷ Jürgen Moltmann has been the most prominent exponent of the notion of *perichoresis* as a principle of approach to the doctrine of the Trinity. This approach prioritises the *persona* as the basis of unity over and above the *ousia* (essence) and is central to his notion of divine engagement with the world. As Stanley Grenz (2004) observes, ‘for Moltmann, God’s triunity is integrally connected to the divine engagement with the world, which forms a history centering on Jesus Christ’, 75. See Moltmann (1981), 174-176. For a critical response to this see, Otto (2001), 366-384.

⁴⁸ See, Holmes (1-32).

of the Trinity as a model for the Church as a *societatis unitate*. Ted Peters typifies the rejection of such correlations on this point:

Although Boff wants to work with a correlation between a divine society and a human society on a non-hierarchical basis, the divine society of which he speaks is in fact a monarchy; and because this monarchy is shrouded in eternal mystery apart from the time in which we live, no genuine correlation with human society can be made'.⁴⁹

Often within the modern 'trinitarian ecclesiology', Augustine has come off as responsible for an overbearing emphasis upon the one essence (*ousia*), rather than upon the participating *hypostasis/persona*.⁵⁰ This accusation is laid at the foot of the French Jesuit Theodore de Régnon (1892-8) (For an analysis of this position see, Barnes (1995), 237-50). Central to the revivalists, is the claim that Augustine under the influence of Neo-Platonism payed insufficient attention to the Threeness of the Trinity over an impulse to convey the oneness of God.⁵¹ In other words, Augustine's overbearing focus was upon the essence, which undermined the relational importance of the persons and their interconnectedness. His *de Trinitate* and other works have through this paradigm have been mined for supporting evidence to bolster this claim. However, this displays, as Ayres has presented as a persuasive argument,⁵² a tendency within Systematic theology to see historical doctrinal texts as proof texts for contemporary arguments.

Augustine's notion of the Trinity however is far from our contemporary theological concerns. In placing the Trinity at the centre of his theology of the Church, Augustine simply is placing the Church within the *sinus* (bosom) of God as the place of continued revelation of love. His entire 'Nicene theology' is rooted in the concerns of his age. The stress he places upon divine

⁴⁹ Peters (1993), 114.

⁵⁰ See, Gunton (1993) 51-55; (2003) 115-137; Zizioulas (2008), 65-69.

⁵¹ See, Ayres (2004), 366-378.

⁵² Ayres (2010) is perhaps the most comprehensive re-calibration of the notion of Augustine's corruption of Nicaea and that *de Trinitate* represents Augustine's definitive systematic theology (in the modern sense) of his treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity.

inseparability (AU Jo, 20.6; ‘*ergo illa ambulatio opus est patris et filii inseparabile, utrumque ibi operantem uideo; nec pater filium deseruit, nec filius a patre discessit*’) and simplicity (AU cf, 4.29; ‘*mirabiliter simplicem atque incommutabilem*’) are principles of Pro-Nicene trinitarianism that seek to uphold the council’s *fiat* that divinity is one in three hypostases/persons.⁵³ Claims of western Latin corruption of Nicene are not to be found in Augustine’s own day.⁵⁴ As Stephen Holmes notes: ‘no writer of the day accuses Augustine of misunderstanding Constantinopolitan Trinitarianism’.⁵⁵ Contemporary misunderstandings concerning Augustine’s writing have been the mission of others who have argued the case convincingly enough.⁵⁶

Within the context of the Church, Augustine links the body of Christ (*totus Christus*) with the divine activity of the Church not as a model of dwelling but rather as a foundation of its life and existence. It is the incarnation of God in Christ which forges the channel of the continued presence of God in the Body of Christ on earth through the Spirit which ties the created order within the Church directly into the divine life of God. It is this principle of the inseparable operation of the persons of the Trinity and the unity of the Godhead that underpins Augustine’s entire ecclesiology of the Church as the place of God’s life, through which its members are grafted into the grace of God. This ecclesial dwelling is entirely underpinned by his notion of the Trinity and the Church as one connected unity of divergent natures. Thus, within the context of the

⁵³ For examples other examples of the inseparability of operations see, AU ep, 11.2; AU Jo, 6.2; AU 14.9. For an example of divine simplicity see, AU Ps, 121.5-6. See also, Lewis (2000), JECS, 39-82.

⁵⁴ Augustine stands firmly within the Latin western tradition of defending Nicaea. Hillary of Poitiers, Marius Victorinus and Ambrose all stand within this matrix. See Holmes (2012), 121-129.

⁵⁵ Holmes (2012), 131.

⁵⁶ Lewis Ayres and Michael Barnes have convincingly demonstrated to both systematians and Historical theologians that Augustine’s works have been misrepresented and deployed out of context. For example, Augustine’s *de Trinitate* is a work of polemics rather than a work of dogmatic. In agreement, I would add that the *Tractatus* is a rich mine of reflection of Augustine’s doctrine of the Trinity which displays his Latin tradition. For the relevant works of Ayres. See, Ayres (2004); (2010); Barnes (2001).

Donatist schism, Augustine placed the emphasis upon separation as exclusion from the life of God and the future hope of redemption. The Church is the exclusive place of divine activity; the birth pool of God's children through which his friends are forged and revealed. Thus, it is the Church as its members, who occupy the privileged position of growing together within the unity of the Spirit (*caritas Dei*) by which its members find themselves *religare* (to bind) within the intimacy of Father and Son.

The Shape of this Work

Part I seeks to touch upon the three major themes of our enquiry as they set in place the context of the challenge Augustine faces alongside the development of his notion of friendship. The final application of it in tying back, *religare*, two communities of Christians into one *ecclesia*. In the aftermath of the Edict of Unity (405), Augustine reconfigures and offers his treasured vision of love as ecclesial friendship. Not any friendship within the hierarchy of the institution but that of its pinnacle, a peal beyond price within the ancient world, friendship with the God who befriends his subjects within his own body, the Church. Our first Chapter paints the picture of the disastrous history shared by both Catholics and Donatists. It demonstrates that the schism was born in an atmosphere of fear concerning the increasing acceptance of Christianity and what that meant for the pattern of persecution that had been set. In many ways, the schism was symptomatic of a greater issue of what it meant to be a Christian in the world. As we shall see, some embrace the coming of the new age, particularly with Constantine, others deplored it as diabolical. The rifts between what became the two groups was set within the age of Cyprian, which is why his legacy became so weaponised within the dispute. Catholics and Donatists, in essence, were Christians with diametrically opposed views to how one was to be a Christian in the new age. The election of Caecilian in many ways marks the initial chain reaction that sets in motion the rancorous

rupture of the Christian Church in North Africa. This was further amplified and augmented by the State finding in favour with the Catholic cause and thus setting in motion the intractable alienation of native North African Donatists. The Donatists' story is one of increasing estrangement and alienation by both Empire and Church, which in turn became ever increasingly integrated. By the age of Augustine, one could simply use the phrase 'Imperial Catholicism' to denote this symbiosis of empire and *ecclesia*.

As we shall see, this increasing alignment of the Church and Empire drew increasing agitation, violence and even revolt against both. It is important to highlight these as it adds considerable context to the project with which Augustine is faced, particularly as he stands between two groups forced together under one roof. The issue of Church unity for Augustine remained the single most intractable issue he faced as it was so indelibly wedded to the identity of North African Christianity. The Catholic cause was very much seen as invasive and compromised by its association with *traditores* and tyrannical Imperial legislation. Augustine's conversion of Imperial pressure into unitive peace was a seismic task. Nevertheless, as an esteemed rhetorician and accomplished polemicist, Augustine brings the past grievances into a framework of trinitarian unity which underpinned his entire notion of the Church as the body of the befriended.

In chapter two we then move onto the theme of friendship itself exploring its roots and the place it gained within his formative years. Friends became a surrogacy for family and beyond that they gravitated towards the most personal and precious parts of his life. Augustine's own account of his life portrays a formation of a boy constantly in search for love, affection and meaning. From the rather incidental ties and through his continual immersion into the classical curriculum of his day, his notion of what friends were and what forged them deepened and clarified. Augustine found in friends the sweet taste of stability

and he found they provided an inner balm for his self-*absentia* and estrangement. Inner consorts of the *animus*.

By the time Augustine reaches his advanced education in rhetoric, two events drastically shape and secure a foundational notion of what friends were. This was his re-immersion into the writings of Cicero's Hortensius coupled with his conversion to Manichaeism. Cicero, through his more juvenile educational years in Madauros, introduced him to the classical norms of Latin literature, which he loved. Cicero, however, is fundamental as a conduit for conveying to Augustine the classical norms and notion of friendship. 1). Cicero introduces a grammar to Augustine of friendship being a participation within the *animus* of one another. This feature resides always in Augustine's thoughts on friendship. He also provided Augustine with the philosophical ideas of community of the many becoming one. The idea of friendship being a seeking of the good (*summa bonum*) with likeminded men and that of the binding of the *anima*. The notion of common *consensio* on things human and divine, as we have seen, comes via Cicero. He presents to Augustine the three most notable insights of friendship in terms of the classical features of commonality, agreement, and participation in one another's essential being. 2). His conversion to Manichaeism which affixes a religious worldview to these principals of friendship. We shall see that Augustine understood that if his friends were to remain friends in the true sense, they had to move with him in and out of his prevailing opinions, particularly his worldviews. Augustine, as we shall see, spent an inordinate amount of time convincing and converting his friends to his philosophical and religious affinities.

The clearest example of this, being the death of the unnamed friend (AU cf. 4.7-15). It is here we glimpse Augustine's vision of friendship and that of its classical character in full. We see him display notions of disagreement jeopardising their friendship and in a sad twist of irony not lost on Augustine, it is caused by the baptism of his friend as a Catholic. At this

point, Augustine had converted him to his newfound faith of Manichaeism and the willing acceptance of a death-bed baptism by his friend was undermined and dismissed by Augustine in humorous impropriety. The friend's acceptance of it, as Augustine knew only too well had thrown their friendship into turmoil before he passed into death. The sacred bond of *consensio* essential to friendship had been broken. Augustine describes the death in terms of the friend being *alter ego* or another self and sees his grief in terms of personal loss. This also illuminates Augustine's notion of friendship with mortal things which strike at the heart of the instability he most feared. He came to realise that friends could only ballast his own inner instability if they were somehow more stable as a subject than himself. This realisation of human temporality plagued his anxiety of existence. Nevertheless, he would find his 'return' or rest in a man who would overcome the limits of life and love, time and material through the incarnate *Verbum*, Christ the God-man. By the time we arrive at the *Tractatus*, his notion of friendship had again moved further on.

With all of these pieces in place when Augustine does eventually become a Catholic Christian in Milan under the influence of its masterfully skilled ecclesiastical Orator Ambrose, these notions of friendship and friends becomes like everything else in his life, wedded to Pro-Nicene Catholic Christianity. In this fusion, along with his skills as a Rhetorician, the deposit of friendship and the foundation of friends becomes exclusively aligned to the membership and doctrines of Catholic Christianity. That which makes friendship equitable comes via the primordial befriender, the God who became *caro*. Thus, the notion of friendship as a binding between beings becomes a transferable investment of reciprocal *anima* into being bound within the body of the Church of which the incarnation cements an inseparable bond between Creator and creation. This binding between beings becomes founded upon the Trinity which forges the unity created in Christ and maintained through the Spirit. In essence, the Church becomes the body through which its members participate in the *summum bonum*. Membership enables the community to participate within the divine life as God's friends

through Christ who forges the Church's participation within the very soul of God's own triunity through the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 3 explores the pneumatology character of divine friendship. In this chapter we see how Augustine's understanding of the Church and the plurality of its members is held in unity through the love of God who can overcome distinction via charity (the Holy Spirit) which binds the many into one holy fellowship (*ex pluribus unum fecit*). This expression of the Church as the body of the befriended bound together within the Spirit of *caritas* emerges from Augustine's mission to bring unity to a Church consisting of both Catholics and Donatists. Tractates one to sixteen are, as stated, delivered in the aftermath of the Edict of unity which criminalized Donatism with a legislative and enforced eradication of the group. Augustine even took possession of the Donatist basilica around the corner from his own.⁵⁷ When Augustine appeared in Hippo Regius,⁵⁸ it was divided by competing cultures as well as between Pagans and Christian, who were themselves split between Catholics (Caecilianist) and Donatists.⁵⁹ Sometime just after his ordination in 391, Augustine wrote to the primate of Carthage, Aurelius, urging a more confrontational approach to the issues facing the Church within his province of Africa.⁶⁰ Hippo was administered by Carthage and in 393 a council was held in Hippo at which Augustine delivered a lecture which became published as *de Fides et Symbolo*.⁶¹ This clearly illustrates Augustine zeal for unity and marks his deployment as an accomplished Catholic spokesman. In December 406 Augustine began preaching the

⁵⁷ On the proximity of the two Basilicas in Hippo, Augustine give us a clue. In AU ep, 29.11, he places as within eye shot and so the Donatist Basilica must have been within the same quarter as Augustine's own, the '*maiore basilica*' (AU s, 325.2), also referred to as the '*ecclesia Pacis*' (AU Fel, 2.1). See Van Deer Meer (1961), 20-28.

⁵⁸ See, Van Der Meer (1961), 16-28.

⁵⁹ AU ep, 29.11.

⁶⁰ AU ep, 22.

⁶¹ AU re, 1.16.

Tractatus. Catholics were now the dominate force and Donatism severely suppressed. Augustine focused his polemic upon the law of love and how the unity of the Church was held together not by force but by how God through his Church binds the many into his very life through the Spirit which is the soul of the Church. Here we see Augustine transpose his notion of friendship as an investment of *anima*, deposited within the Body of the Church, into the Spirit, which is the soul of God which binds all in all. Within the Church Augustine seeks to present it as the place where *amicitias conglutinet*, where true friendships are cemented to one another within the divine life of God through his earthly body.

Friendship within this chapter is born out of his pastoral polemic of holding together a Church that has only known separation and division. Within the Church, Augustine schools both groups on what it means to love God and one another *in* Christ, as his body. He presents the Church as a kind of womb of wisdom through which God brings to new birth those who are his true and abiding friends. They are to love each other for God's sake if not for their own and be friends of one another if they are to be true friends of God.

Part II is a more focused and forensic assessment of how Augustine deploys his skills of being an orator through the lens of the gospel of John with its particular emphasis upon being friends of Christ. In this section we move through three fields of enquiry. Firstly we briefly outline the gospel of John and how it presents itself as an expedient in terms of a fully developed biblical picture of the triunity of God and of the reality of God made flesh, of which Augustine cements as a central phrase '*factum est uerbum caro, et habitavit in nobis*'⁶² to underpin his trinitarian ecclesiology. We also focus upon the nature of the Church in John's gospel (the bridegroom) and of what it means to become a friend. Of course, these fit neatly within the nucleus of this work, being that John's gospel places a high value upon the notion of friendship as a central vision of what it means to be a disciple of Christ. This manifests

⁶² Augustine mentions this phrase 31 times within the *Tractatus*.

itself in Augustine's call to become friends of the bridegroom through belonging to the bride (Church).

This leads onto the next chapter which focuses upon Augustine's dissection and hermeneutic of friendship as ecclesial indwelling. We look at the tools Augustine brings to bear as an ecclesiastical Orator (of which within his age there were many) and how that informs his hermeneutical polemic of what it means to belong as well as believe. Nevertheless, it is here that Augustine discloses that developed vision of Christian friendship through the use of figurative and rhetorical devices—tropes.

From here we explore what may be the central figure of his polemic, that of John the Baptist—the *amicus sponsi*. Here we see Augustine's most vivid and clearest vision of what it means to belong to the Church in which Augustine displays before them John, as a prime example of what it is to be a friend of Christ through being another *amicus sponsi*. For Augustine and most Christians of his age, John the Baptist represents the summit of what a life of faith displays. In many ways, John is what may be figuratively described as a 'Cyprian of Scripture' in which through John, Augustine shows his listeners that the whole weight of tradition and Scripture rests upon the *Ecclesia Catholica*. Augustine in this section displays why it is that the Catholic Church is the exclusive place of validity, not because of its members but because of its foundation—the Trinity. Nevertheless, we begin in a place far away from the call to humility and that of the hope of a Church in harmony with itself. Before we arrive at the summit of divine love in the form of *ecclesial* friendship through Christ's body, we begin in the age before Augustine in which the Church rent itself asunder in the search for an authentic vision of what it meant to belong to the Church of Jesus Christ.

PART I

In the first part we explore the central features that provide the pieces of our enquiry. Often In this section, the Donatist schism is presented in passing.⁶³ However, we explore the social and political content of the divide and the attitudes that enabled the rupture of the Church in North West Africa. In this first chapter we see how these theological ‘attitudes’ become exposed in the wake of the Constantinian revolution which augments the intractability of a provincial ecclesial dispute. This is amplified and embedded within a prevailing tide of increasing ‘Catholic’ assimilation within the Roman world.

From within this matrix, Augustine deals with the issue of ecclesial friendship. Yet, his formation began in Africa as a young man. We trace that formation within the context of his other attachments and see how friendship emerges as the dominant and superior desire for intimacy and meaning. We see how friendship becomes enmeshed within a classical grammar which through various stages infuses with both religious and philosophical ideals of agreement and love. Indeed, for Augustine, friendship becomes the summit of what love *achieves*. Ultimately, this becomes baptised within his *religio* into his faith as a Catholic Christian and is transposed as a reciprocal investment into Christ through his body—the Church.

From this embedded notion of the Church as an institution of sacred binding of friends, we see Augustine apply this to the issues at hand, Donatism. From the issuing of the Edict of Unity (405) by the State, Augustine deploys this to his advantage in calling his mixed congregation to love each other and to love God by mutual indwelling. This indwelling is framed within his trinitarian notion of the Church and that of true friendship as its fruit. To be friends they must believe, belong, behave and above all be friends with one another in Christ.

⁶³ See, fn 21 (above).

Chapter 1

The Eagle of Empire and Africa: Donatism in the Context of Church and State

Omina conveniunt dicto fulvusque Tonantis armiger a liquida
cunctis spectantibus aethra correptum pedibus curvis innexuit
hydram, dumque reluctantem morsu partitur obunco,
haesit in ungue caput

Claudius (370-404), *De Bello Gildonico* 1.26¹

Introduction

This chapter aims to outline and explain the context of the formation of Augustine's tractates on John. They were born within the midst of the extremely acrimonious rancour of the Donatist schism which had torn communities and families apart for a century. Augustine's own family like most who came from Christian stock, were among those affected. The writings of the *Tractatus* is forged within a particular period in which Catholics were capitalising upon the new wave of anti-Donatist legislation which secured the resurgent Catholic bishops of North Africa in their attacks upon the schism. Augustine was at the spearhead of this new and unique Catholic opportunity to convert Imperial pressure into Catholic converts. Only Optatus of Milevis² could

¹ 'An omen confirms his word and before the eyes of all, the tawny bird, armour-bearer of Jove, swoops down from the open sky and seizes a snake in his curved talons; and while the eagle tears his struggling prey with his hooked beak, his claws are embedded in its head.' (LCL 135: 467-471), 132,

² Optatus of Milevis, like so many of his age was named after the small Numidian town Milevis (Milah) which was twenty-five miles north west of Cirta (Constantine). From the centre of the Numidian heartlands, Optatus produced his work of Against the Donatists. This *apologia* also known under Jerome's title *Contra Parmeniarum Donatistam* (HI ill, 110). The work probably went through two editions, first published c365 with six books and a further edition in c384 with an additional 7th book. Like his work, Optatus himself is also a figure of which we know little. Nevertheless, he was famous enough to be mentioned by Jerome and his final publication of seven books became a cherished account of the controversy, both in

be credited with singlehandedly challenging the Donatists in North Africa. Augustine with the backing of a close-knit group of friends built upon Optatus' legacy of challenging both the history and the theological reasons for separation. Though Augustine had begun engaging with the issue of the Donatism as early as 393, it wasn't until a decade later that Augustine would tease out the theological issues and bring to bear the full weight of his intellect and mastery of the art of rhetoric. It is fair to say that the relationship between the State and the Donatists was beset by both resentment and suspicion from well before the initial incident which exposed a far broader issue. The contentious election of Caecilian as Bishop of Carthage and primate of western North Africa became the epicentre of the schism. This was coupled with a move beyond being a persecuted people under Diocletian to an Empire under Constantine and the implementation of a new *modus acceptio*. This change in attitude was greeted by Catholics as the arrival of God's justice—for Donatists it was the evacuation of the integrity and independence of Holy Mother Church. Constantine was regarded as a hero by many but by others, as a usurper of Christ as head of the Church. In the wake of the Donatist complaint concerning the election of Caecilian and Constantine's vindication and support for him, the dye was cast. The relationship between Donatists and the Roman State from that point continued to be beset by conflict and recriminations. The *Tractatus* begins with a footing within this matrix. In the next chapter we look more closely at Augustine's formation in friendship and what it meant to him and how it became a central feature of his theology of unity within the Catholic Church—the true body of Christ. Before moving further, we begin with the involvement of Empire within this context and the formation of the Catholic support from the State and its gradual absorption.

The Eagle of Empire and Africa

terms of its historical detail and theological continuity with Cyprian's ecclesiology. See the 'Introduction' to OPT Par (1997), trans, Edwards, viii-xxxi; Eno (1999), 596-597.

By the time Augustine began delivering his tractates on John, Donatism had already peaked. Western North Africa as a whole began to feel different, as a new wave of Imperial Catholicism was resurgent and the Donatist cause was severely undermined by the Edict of Unity issued the previous year.³ This pressing decline in the Donatist hold on Africa was rooted in an Imperial court far more determined than that of previous administrations. At the helm of this new wave of Imperial suppression was the Emperor Honorius who set his sights on bringing unity to the ecclesial issues of Africa once and for all. This was aided by the new wave of energetic and increasingly militant Catholic clergy, enthusiastic at the prospect of capitalising upon the Edict's pressure in bringing about an end to Donatist support and subscription. It is fair to say that Augustine was the main interlocuter in the ecclesial domain of this rancorously developing debate. Augustine in many ways fulfils a criterion few could compete with in dealing with issues between Church and State. He was a native of Africa who was fortunate enough to have ascended to the very summit of Roman intellectualism and had held this prestigious position prior to his

³ The Edict of Unity, a collection of decrees which comes from Honorius' fury against Donatists who violently resisted Catholic attempts to recover churches. The Edict was primarily in response to the petitions of Severus and Maximianus who presented themselves as evidence of Donatist violence and contempt for the Imperial legislation. Augustine tells us that he was beaten so severely his father died shortly afterwards: 'Seruus nomine cum inuasum a uestris locum repeteret et utriusque partis procuratores proconsulare praestolarentur examen, repente sibi in oppido memorato uestris armatis inruentibus uix uiuus aufugit. a quibus pater eius presbyter aetate ac moribus grauis ea caede, qua uehementer adflictus est, post dies paucos excessit e uita.' (CSEL, 3: 47). Maximianus we are told at the attack upon his church, 'sub altari quo confugerat' and was subjected to brutal and degrading treatment, 'fracto eiusque lignis aliisque fustibus, ferro etiam crudeliter caesus totum illum locum sanguine obpleuit. acceperat autem et grande uulnus in inguine, unde cruore largius effluente continuo moreretur, nisi maior eorum crudelitas per occultam dei misericordiam profuisset. nam cum membris ex ea parte nudatis semiuiuus insuper pronusque traheretur, exundantes uenas latenter puluis obstruit. inde nostrorum manibus cum ferretur, rursus illis inruentibus uiolenter extortus est grauiusque mulcatus et de excelsa turri noctu praecipitatus subter cinere stercoris molliter iacebat exceptus, sensu amisso uix extremum spiritum tenens.' (CSEL, 52: 454). This Edict gave sweeping powers to Catholics to recover churches and made Donatism illegal. It banned their gatherings and inflicted harsh penalties. For a general and insightful overview of Imperial legislation, see Lenski (2018), 180-6. For general commentary of events, see Frend (1952), 261-274; Hermanowicz (2008), 150-3; Shaw (2011), 537.

conversion to the Imperial Chair of Rhetoric at Milan.⁴ He was also a convert to Catholicism in Milan by Ambrose, and had been initiated into Ambrose's Imperial inner circle of ecclesiastical Orators.⁵ These qualifying elements gather together to make Augustine supremely suitable in dealing with the issues of Schism in North Africa. The primate in Africa at this time was Aurelius, the Catholic (Caecilianist) Bishop of Carthage, whom Augustine knew from the time of his arrival back in Africa,⁶ which Ambrose would have arranged. When Augustine arrived back in Africa, along with Alypius, he stayed in the house of a powerful and pious Catholic, Innocentius, '*vicariae praefecturae*'.⁷ In many ways, the Imperial Court and the Catholic Church at this time were far more closely aligned under Honorius than they had ever been before. After the Theodosian revolution⁸, Catholic Christianity had ascended the summit of Roman *religio* as not only the official religion of Empire, but as its only tolerated expression. Honorius consolidated this ascendancy with vigour and in many ways his interactions with Donatism provide a window into his aims as Emperor. Honorius faced the continual pressure of external tribes which had aligned itself with Arianism. It seems that Honorius required an internally coherent and stable Catholic barometer to hold and congeal the internal populace against external aims and allegiances. The efforts of Honorius and

⁴ AU cf, 5.23.

⁵ See, Harrison (2013), 47-49. See also, Cameron (1991), 120-154.

⁶ AU ci, 22.8, 'in quibus erat et ex quibus solus est nunc in rebus humanis iam episcopus cum honore a nobis debito nominandus Aurelius'. (CCSL, 48: 817).

⁷ AU ci, 22.8; 22.23.

⁸ After a brief interruption by Julian the Apostate (361-363 AD), the 'Constantinian revolution' is significantly consolidated by Theodosius, who embraces "Pro-Nicene" Christianity with vigour. He pushes on to bring to fruition the establishment of the Catholic Church as the means by which the Empire became Christ's. This created an atmosphere in which the Church became imperialised not just in its structure but also in its outlook. R. Markus observes that Augustine shared in the "elation" of the triumph of the Catholic Church and states: 'The Theodosian era set the seal on the 'Christian times' and gave this cast of minds a firm hold'. See, Markus (1974), 121-142. A good example of this is the Edict of Thessalonica issued in 380 (C.Th, 16.1.2), which effectively cemented the Catholic Church as the official religion of the Empire. See also, 'Catholic Ascendancy', Stephen and Friell, (1995), 47-60.

Aurelius in this regard represented a two-pronged attack upon the Donatists and displayed the aims of both Catholic Christianity and Empire as symbiotic.⁹

At the beginning of the fifth century the standard bearers of the new *Comes Africae*¹⁰ had firmly claimed the territory for Honorius and Africa was thus further consolidated under the appointment of Heraclian as *Comes* in 410.¹¹ Aurelius appointed bishop of Carthage in 391 and Augustine, made priest in the same year, represented an ecclesial force, capable of converting Imperial pressure into Catholic unity. Honorius approached Africa with the crushing blows of the swooping Eagle of the numerous talons of Imperial power, with both an immediacy and determination his predecessors lacked. Augustine came into the well-established battle ground with a convert's zeal armed with his rhetorical prowess. On his return to Africa, he came with an immense intellectual gravitas flanked by a close knit group of friends at his side—a devoted band of brothers: They saw themselves, as others have noted, Catholic '*servus dei*'.¹² Augustine was enlisted into the fray as one of a number of liberal educated Orators, gifted in the art of persuasion.¹³ Amongst this arsenal was the gospel of John, whom Augustine regarded as the premier authoritative account of Jesus. He claimed that: 'Saint John the Apostle, who has not undeservedly been compared to an eagle because of his spiritual understanding, raised his preaching up to a much more sublime height than the other three'.¹⁴ Needless to say, by the time Augustine began preaching on John (406) much water had passed under the bridge. In the December of 406, the swooping blows of both Empire and *Ecclesia* had descended upon the heads

⁹ See, Whitehouse (2018), 29-31.

¹⁰ Bathanarius was made *Comes* in 401, the brother-in-law of Stilicho. See, Frend, (1952), 228.

¹¹ See, Whitehouse (2018), 30.

¹² See, Brown (2000), 125-130.

¹³ See, Brown (2020).

¹⁴ AU Jo, 36.1, 551; 'sanctus Iohannes apostolus, non immerito secundum intellegentiam spiritalem aquilae comparatus, Altius multoque sublimius aliis tribus erexit praedicationem suam'. (CCSL, 36: 323).

of the Donatists, and both Eagles, had by then fully engaged their penetrating talons into their prey.

It is worth very briefly outlining the history and relationship between religion and politics in the age of late Roman antiquity. This connection may be obscured or even invisible to modern western sensibilities that the division of spheres, whether political, religious, or otherwise—did not exist as they do today. As John Milbank once famously stated: ‘Once, there was no “secular”’,¹⁵ in which he means that there was once no such thing as a society which kept its religion beyond itself. With Augustine, this ‘sacralization’ of Empire would be re-cast in light of his notion of ‘sacred history’ (that which is written), which re-casts a profane past, in light of an eschatological future. His notions of the two cities, *civitas terrena* and the *civitas dei* paved the way for a political theology in which the foundation of the ‘secular’, as an ambivalent and neutral space, could accommodate both spheres. Here we glimpse a notion of the *Ecclesia* as part of a world of institutions rather than a separate and purely sacred entity. A place of both wheat and tares.¹⁶ Nevertheless, at the outset of the Christian faith, religion and politics were distinct—yet parts of one integrated social system. There was no such thing as a notion that the two spheres were separable in the way we may assume possible today. Indeed, beyond the western frontiers of modernity, religion still holds political, social and tribal affiliations as internal benchmarks of allegiances. For example, the de-population of western Anatolia of indigenous Christian tribes by the Ottoman Empire (1894-1924); was based upon identity and religious affiliations pertaining to the enemies of the Ottoman State. Groups were singled out for their religious and ethnic backgrounds as indicators of loyalties to the State.¹⁷

¹⁵ Milbank, (2006), 10.

¹⁶ Robert Markus’ works ‘The Sacred and the Secular: From Augustine to Gregory the Great’, in (1994), 84-96 and in particular his magisterial work (1970). Here he proposes the thesis that Augustinian thought paved the way for understanding society and political institutions as both part of a pluralistic mixture consisting of both saint and sinner. Sowing the seeds of a nascent notions of a secular sphere. Also see, Hollerich (1999).

¹⁷ What has become commonly called, ‘The Armenian genocide’ is a tragic and savage example of a modern State, singling out a group for mass extermination based on religious

Nevertheless, despite the rise of the secular agenda, in the form of religious emancipation in the modern western world, it remains the case that religion cannot be separated out from peoples aims and ambitions for themselves and for their fellow citizens—or indeed for the State. In the ancient Roman world, politics and religion were the two hands of Empire, they came from the same place. In the eyes of both State and the general populace, demarcations between such spheres were unknown, and—unknowable. Christianity was seen as a religion of unknown aims and ambitions, which drew a great deal of hostile attention towards itself. Roman officials in response legislated against it and suppressed it wherever it emerged. This intolerant response was nothing new as this was the experience for many other religions in the world of Roman antiquity.¹⁸ One's allegiances were often political and religious; they formed the substantive framework for such social fidelities. Christians were often persecuted for being 'atheists'; in other words, they did not believe in the gods of Empire and therefore did not believe in the Imperial cult of the Emperor. Such dissent was not or could not be tolerated generally unless an established praxis had a valid mitigating pedigree, such as Judaism—for which there were exemptions.

Christianity, upon its arrival within the Empire, had neither pedigree nor an established praxis. Christians had found themselves under suspicion almost from its inception and there are numerous examples of this.¹⁹ However, this pattern of suspicion provided a framework that became increasingly determined and violent towards dissent and groups that were deemed maladjusted to the Roman State. The persecutions of the Church throughout the Roman world

ethnicity. This of course finds a far more systematic expression in Nazi Germany with the annihilation of six million Jews in what is known as the Holocaust. For the destruction of ethnic Christians by the Ottoman State. See, Morris and Ze'Evi, (2019).

¹⁸ For example, eastern cults were seen as a threat to Roman identity. In the age of Augustine, Manichaeism was viewed with great suspicion and deemed incompatible with Roman values and identity.

¹⁹ For example, see, Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, (St Ives, Penguin, 1996), 'The Burning of Rome', 365-6; *The Letters of The Younger Pliny*, trans, W. Melmoth, (Marson Gate, 2013), 'Letter 97', 264-5. See Frend (2003), 95-125.

ebbed and flowed as the tide upon the shores of time. Hostility was usually instigated by locals, fearful of their neighbours, which often descended into low level persecution and harassment. This of course could escalate up the chain of the Imperial structure, or sometimes descend from the office of the Emperor himself. Periods of Imperial legislative pressure as well as sporadic periods of all-out State sanctioned oppression occurred. Immediately prior to the Donatist schism, none was more ruthless and comprehensive than the final major great persecution under Diocletian (303-305). Persecution had a dramatic hardening and anodising effect upon the Church in general. Being a Christian was simply to expect oppression—yet ultimate glory. This anodising effect upon the Church became acutely felt, none more so than on the North African planes of Numidia. It made Christians more resilient and far more militant in their aims beyond a corrupt and unjust world. This often translated into a religious mindset which affected the distancing between the ‘world’ and the ‘Christian community’. Nevertheless, persecutions through the prism of theological understanding increasingly became viewed as periods of purification in which the members consolidated their faith and out of their blood, inspiring and iconic martyrs were born. This often precured the attention of the populace through which persecution necessitated the future growth of the Church which aimed for God’s kingdom. In North Africa, Tertullian famously exemplified this attitude:

In that case, you say, why do you complain of our persecutions? You ought rather to be grateful to us for giving you the sufferings you want. Well, it is quite true that it is our desire to suffer, but it is in the way that the soldier longs for war... it is our battler to be summoned to your tribunals that there, under fear of execution, we may battle for truth.²⁰

Of course, this passage leads up to the famous phrase, ‘the blood of Christians is seed’.²¹ Thus, persecution was seen as a test, to many, a necessity for the faithful and the means by which the faith was both strengthened and spread. This effect infuriated Imperial officials—yet it was

²⁰ TE ap, 50, (ANF, 3), 54-5.

²¹ TE ap, 50, (ANF, 3), 55.

this character of endurance and persistence that eventually won out. Nevertheless, *religio* always had political implications and though aspects of faith may have been seen as private, it was always understood as having public implications. Eventually, beginning in the west, a more tolerant and accepting wind arrived with two officials, Maxentius and finally Constantine. The connection between *religio* and the political spheres nevertheless remained. The Empire and Emperors always demanded conformity—whether Christian or otherwise, in order to retain control. With the gradual acceptance of Christianity as part of Roman life, the demands for conformity would be re-forged within a far more Christian atmosphere. Constantine would set the new standard of acceptance for a Church at one with itself and Empire. The Christian age of Empire had arrived.

At the beginning of the early fourth Century in Africa, Christianity had endured the most intense and sustained persecution under the Emperor Diocletian. Tales originating since before that time had established, for many, a fixation with a pure Christian identity in opposition to the powers and principalities of this world under the guise of the Roman Empire. Emperors, to many early Christians and to North Africans in particular, seemed to represent the powers of Darkness and the Devil. This was not the case for all. In many ways, this intense forging of this rigorous and unyielding vision of a pure Christian identity, born out of the blood of the Martyrs, became the major fault-line between Catholic and Donatist Christians. Maureen Tilley highlights this dichotomy with great clarity in her ‘Introduction’ to the *Donatist Martyr Stories*:

Donatism was a religious movement which peaked in fourth-century North Africa in response to a crisis of ecclesiology. The specific point at issue was the relationship of the Christian community to the larger society. All the disputes between Catholics and Donatists were rooted in their different approaches to the matter. Earliest Christianity had viewed the state, specifically the Roman Empire, in two ways, both of which had biblical warrant...Beginning with the writings of Paul and Luke and continuing with the Apologists, Christians saw the State was a necessary condition of life in the world, a manifestation of the general authority of God over creation...A second view of the relationship between Church and State developed. The State as an entity and in the person of its leader was the servant of Satan or Antichrist.²²

²² Tilley, (1996), xii.

In general terms, Catholic Christians appeared to be far more disposed as ‘world embracing’, Donatists, far more sceptical and suspicious of earthly powers and interference and thus more inclined to being ‘world rejecting’.²³ On the one hand, Constantine represents a victory of God over the world through patient endurance of the saints—for others, it was a betrayal through which the smoke of Satan had entered into the life of Church.²⁴ This vision of victory which divided the two groups is most clearly and disastrously illustrated in the story of the *Abitinian Martyrs* (304).²⁵ After the Diocletian persecutions and the arrival of Constantine, many Christian had to re-think and re-forge their view of the ‘world’ within these two ‘Biblically’ warranting approaches. Nevertheless, the persecution of Christians by the Roman State had long since been a feature of African Christianity. Stories of the Martyrs filled the minds of North African Christians long before the Donatist Schism. From heroes such as the *Scillitan martyrs* (c188), *Perpetua and Felicity* (203), to the great hero of all African Christians, the Martyred Bishop of Carthage, Cyprian, whose stories and writings became a second canon of authority. In many ways, Cyprian represents the crowning glory of all martyrs whose legacy would be rancorously fought over by both Catholics and Donatists alike. The great episodes of persecution aroused from the mid-third century to the beginning of the fourth crystallised North African attitudes. This protracted period of persecution (249-305) was seen by many as a ‘golden age’ which Donatists in particular, came to idolise and yearned to return to. The more ‘world affirming’ Catholics on the other hand—found new encouragement in the Constantinian revolution perceived as the arrival of God’s Kingdom and

²³ See, Hoover, (2018).

²⁴ Harrison (2013) makes an illuminating point that the Constantinian revolution and the changing attitudes towards material culture no longer estranged from the world as ‘resident aliens’ but rather at home within the world. She states: ‘After the edict of toleration in 313, the Church was no longer a target for persecution, pushed to the margins, denied any public presence or official acknowledgement, its members made to feel like ‘resident aliens’. Rather, it was granted a real presence—in Church buildings, ornate liturgies, religious houses, art and literature, public officials, canons and councils, holy places, and a sacred geography. In short, it became very much at home in the world, with a material culture to rival that of the Greeks or Romans’. 34.

²⁵ See, Tilley, (1996), 25-49.

sovereign power upon earth. The persecutions of Decius (249-251) and Valerian (253-258), through which Cyprian exercised his episcopacy and became a martyr (258), became the crucible in which later Donatist attitudes became resolutely fixed. Later persecutions, such as that of Diocletian (303-305) merely reinforced it.

Within this matrix, stories of the past glories of the Martyrs, particularly of Saint Cyprian became the focus of dissent. Donatists looked back upon those who suffered persecution from both the State and the Catholics with equal disdain. This ever-increasing alignment between Catholics and the Empire in both perception and praxis fuelled claims of illegitimacy right to the very end of the Donatists' movement. At the heart of the issue concerning the schism, that of the claim of Catholic collusion and thus spiritual pollution by those who had handed over sacred vessels and Scriptures persisted. In the eyes of Donatists the capitulating Catholics were 'broken pots', incapable of retaining the Spirit by virtue of their crime of association with *traditores*, those who had handed over the sacred Scriptures and vessels to the State during persecution.²⁶ Those who had done so, had lost their claim to God's Kingdom and forfeited the Spirit who had departed them. Those who had not offered themselves for martyrdom and had 'handed over' the items to the State had also handed over their own salvation. Donatists claimed Cyprian as a witness against them, who had famously stated: 'how can he cleanse and sanctify the [baptismal] water who is himself unclean, and in whom the Holy Spirit is not?'.²⁷

²⁶ *Traditor* or *Traditores*, were those accused of capitulating with the State during persecution by 'handing over' the sacred vessels and Holy Scriptures to the authorities. In North Africa, persecution, particularly during the time of Cyprian, and largely following his writings, those who had avoided martyrdom by capitulating with the state were seen as voiding their salvation by choosing life in this world over the next. It was a sign that though they did call themselves a Christian, they did not belong to Christ and could only seek redemption by penance and pleading. See, Shaw (2011), 66-106.

²⁷ CY ep, 69.1, (FC, 51), 244.

In c.307,²⁸ Mensurius bishop of Carthage died, and a successor was sought. By this time the two attitudes towards the State were very much seeded within the North African Church. Tensions were already high between Christians of differing worldviews towards the State. The story of the *Abitinian Martyrs* provided a window into this issue.²⁹ In 304 Christians rioted outside the prison in Carthage over the State persecution of Christians. Mensurius, with the aid of his Deacon Caecilian, ordered the relatives of those in prison to be driven away from the prison. Food was knocked out of their hands and they were beaten. The motive is not clear as to why they did this, but most assume it was to not provoke the State into more bloodshed. Nevertheless, as Tilley states: ‘The occasion represents the first time that North African Christians conspired with the State to harass other Christians’.³⁰ Beyond this incident, Caecilian remained a marked man and would not be accepted as a rightful successor. Augustine also relays to us the frosty relationship between Caecilian and Lucilla, ‘a very wealthy and very factious woman’, whom he had offended and who led a faction intending to supplant their own Numidian bishop in place of Caecilian.³¹ This was coupled with the fact that Felix, a consecrating bishop, was accused of being a *traditor*, which, in line with Cyprianic theology, invalidated the election. After the main rupture between Catholics and Donatist had happened (c311), Catholic alignment and integration happened at an astounding rate. With the rise of Constantine and the issuing of toleration with the Edict of Milan (313), Catholics and Donatist became ever increasingly estranged as both sides settled into their new age of Empire. Their differing ‘attitudes’ became the internal compass for the direction of the

²⁸ On the dating of the epicentre of the schism over the election of Mensurius’ archdeacon Caecilian, there is no common consensus. Frend (1952), places the date in 312, (143). Decret (2009), places the date 307 (102-3). The date remains uncertain. See Shaw’s (2011), appendix B, ‘Origins of the Division’ for a chronological appraisal of both ‘long’ and ‘short’ alternatives, 812-819. Also see, Whitehouse (2018), 13.

²⁹ This story conveys the two prevailing attitudes towards the State by various Christians. Donatists would look back upon this episode to highlight Catholic collusion with the State as preceding their duty of caring for fellow Christians being persecuted.

³⁰ Tilley (1996), xii.

³¹ AU Par, 1.5, (WSA, I. 21), 275.

way within the world they would travel. Donatists would never forget the past or forgive it, Constantine to them was simply another slave of Satan, another head of the anti-Christian Hydra, come to take possession of the Church of Christ through assimilation. In this sense, Constantine was in many ways a much greater threat than previous Emperors. Nevertheless, the Church that had handed itself over to the Empire was already viewed as Apostate by Donatists for the crime of *traditor* and therefore void of any substantial Spiritual validity. Catholics were cracked pots, unable to retain the sanctifying spirit. Catholics were seen as agents not of Christ but of Caesar, in many ways they were seen as wolves in sheep's clothing, they looked like the Church but veiled a ravenous beast beset to consume the true children of God and deny them salvation.

After the 'original sin' of Caecilian election, and the appointment of an untainted rival in the form of Majorinus who had the support of the Numidian Bishops, the division was set. The movement in opposition to Caecilian's election was then succeeded by Donatus (the Great) in the same year as the edict of toleration (313) and by whose name it became known. Therefore, the schism became very much fixed as a regional phenomenon and saw itself as apart from the Empire of Rome. Several instances confirmed this as the appeals to Emperors largely resulted in renewed persecutions and legislative restrictions.³² Local events helped embed these entrenched positions. The first major political rift which amplifies the schism, was the usurpation of Domitius Alexander (308-310) who broke away from Rome.³³ It is clearly illustrative of both the ecclesiastical and political sphere that Africa was innately separate in its self-understanding from the rest of the Roman world. Domitius was the *Vicarius Africae* of Maxentius, before declaring himself for Galerius. This was a pivotal moment; in that it was the first time since the schism that the grain shipments were suspended from supplying Rome—it wouldn't be the last. Rations ensued in Rome

³² See, Lenski, (2018), 171-5. AU Par, 1.13.

³³ See, Decret (2009), 102.

and Africa as a priority for the western Empire's prosperity.³⁴ Rome could not tolerate dissension from its western breadbasket, Africa.

Constantine took control of the province of Africa in 312 from Maxentius and continued his policy of toleration towards Christians. Further to this, Constantine ordered the return of Church property and threw his support behind Caecilian as the rightful Bishop of Carthage and the leader of the Church in Africa along with pecuniary incentives.³⁵ Constantine aimed for a Church at one with itself and Empire. Immediately his support for Caecilian drew criticism from Majorinus and his supporters. Petitions were made to the Emperor. Majorinus aimed to enlighten and inform Constantine of the position of both sides and appealed to him to provide an impartial arbitrating body to hear his case. Constantine granted this request by providing a panel of Bishops, including Miltiades, Bishop of Rome (an African) and Marcus, along with a Gallic contingent, to ensure balance as requested by the party of Majorinus.³⁶ By the time the verdict had found in favour of Caecilian, Majorinus had died (313). Donatus as the successor to Majorinus had now taken over the leadership of the group and requested a further appeal. Constantine granted this and a council was convened in Arles the following year (314) which once more found in favour of Caecilian.³⁷ Donatus refused to accept the verdicts and accused Miltiades of also being a *traditor*.³⁸ At this point, Donatus was forbidden to return to Africa³⁹ and further appeals to Constantine were rejected. In 316⁴⁰ Constantine reiterated his support for Caecilian, and legislation was issued to

³⁴ See, Frend (1952), 15.

³⁵ Eusebius, *Historica Ecclesiastica*, 10.6, (NPNF, 1) 382-3.

³⁶ The *pars Donati* thought that Bishops from Gaul would offset any prejudice of the Italian contingent in arbitrating the case. their request was granted. See OPT Par, 1. 22-23. See also, AU Par, 1.10.

³⁷ Frend (1952), 15-1; OPT Par, 1.24, 23; AU Par, 1.11.

³⁸ See, Decret (2009), 104.

³⁹ See, OPT Par, 1.

⁴⁰ OPT Par, 1.25.

confiscate Donatist Churches and property. By then, both Bishops were back in Carthage consolidating their respective positions. Constantine, distracted by more pressing issues, abandoned the project of unifying the Church in North Africa.

By the time Constantine had died in May 337, Donatus had consolidated his position of developing the movement into a self-sufficient Church. During this time the Donatist Church began to flourish despite sporadic harassment from the Roman State. The Catholic Church, in spite of its Imperial backing, began to disintegrate after the death of Caecilian, though it did make significant advancements in securing Imperial acceptance though not from the Punic populace which invariably identified with the indigenous Church of Donatus. On the Catholic side, Gratus succeeded Caecilian and we know little about him. The record paints him as a ‘colourless personality’.⁴¹ Under the reign of Constans, Paul and Macarius were sent to Carthage to assess⁴² the state of the Church in 347. The reason as to what spurred on this ‘assessment’ is ambiguous. However, it clearly indicates a reluctance by the Emperor to leave his father’s work undone in Africa. Various commentators have postulated differing views on the mission of Paul and Macarius.⁴³ Nevertheless, the Numidian populace perceived this as an intervention by the State; it was clearly not well received by Donatists, particularly in the Numidian heartlands. By the time that they had arrived at Thamugadi (Timgad), a centre for fervent Donatism, news had spread and the Bishop of Bagai, also named Donatus, ‘sent heralds through the neighbouring places and all the market-towns, calling the disaffected *circumcelliones* (see below) by name with an invitation to

⁴¹ Frend (1952), 169.

⁴² Optatus refers to them as ‘assessors’. See, OPT Par, 3.4, 70.

⁴³ Frend (1952), claims that this was due to an appeal by Donatus’ to be recognised as the sole Bishop of Carthage by the Emperor, 177. Decret (2009), claims this was due to Constans zeal for unity and orthodoxy, 106. As Shaw (2011), points out there is no evidence for Frend’s claim, 187. As Whitehouse (2018), notes, ‘hence Decret’s conclusion may be correct’, 25. However, despite the fact that Whitehouse does not reference the evidence for Decret’s assertion, Decret does. See, OPT Par, 3.3-4, 61-71.

assemble at an appointed place'.⁴⁴ They were led by two men. Optatus states: 'before the establishment of unity, people of this kind were roving from place to place, when Axido and Fasir (Punic names) were being called leaders of the saints by these same maniacs.'⁴⁵ Here is one of the crystallising moments in the conflict between Catholics and Donatists. Optatus insists it was a humanitarian mission which ended in a call to unity. However, it is clear from the reaction of Donatists and the *circumcellion* that it was understood as a renewed harassment and persecution. It did not end well. A massacre ensued, worst of all in the Basilica of Bagai in which the Donatist had fled into. The Bishop of Bagai, Donatus was murdered along with the group who had fled into the Basilica. In the aftermath, Marculus who led a delegation of Donatist was flogged and later died.⁴⁶ Needless to say, the relationship with the Roman State plummeted. Nevertheless, with the arrival of Julian (apostate) on the throne, Donatist fortunes took an unexpected upwards turn. Julian delighted in Christian disorder and used the Donatists to harass and undermine the Catholics. Before proceeding any further, it is pertinent to further explore this group known as the *circumcellion*. Despite the fact that they were a small minority they become a central feature of figuration in Augustine's mental hermeneutical image of Donatists in general and of the fruitlessness of disunity. This he links to their use of violence, as semiotic of Christians who bear the name but do not dwell in divine *charity* because they are not a friend of Christ. This, as we shall see, is an important theological piece of Augustine's trinitarian ecclesiology. We often find Augustine addressing fellow Catholics to make the polemical point that they reside in the Spirit. Within the tractates, he will often address the faithful in terms of *caritas* with its pneumatological inferences. Such sentiments for Augustine are far from mere sentiment. In other words, Augustine is making the point that they are within the bond of love through the Spirit which binds them together in Christ as participating *anima*. Phrases such as, 'in hac praesenti turba caritatis uestrae

⁴⁴ OPT Par, 3.4, THS, 68.

⁴⁵ OPT par, 3.4, 68-9.

⁴⁶ See Whitehouse (2018), 25; Frend (1952), 177-182; OPT Par, 2.4.

necesse'⁴⁷ are ecclesial in content. What Augustine is doing in such sentiments is reinforcing the claim that the Catholic Church as the exclusive place of Christian love and fidelity through participatory union with Christ. The *circumcellion* for Augustine were prime examples of Christians who did everything without love (1 Cor 13:1-3).⁴⁸

What we know about the *circumcellion* comes to us, like most of what we know about Donatists themselves, from prejudiced sources. The first time they appear as *circumcellion* is from Optatus' account of the mission of Paul and Macarius (see above). Various theories about their origin have been presented and it is unclear exactly how they formed and why. Whatever can be said, it is clear they were made up of men and women who came from the lower classes of an agrarian culture. They were probably disaffected slaves or low paid *libertas* who moved around hiring themselves out for sessional work. Others have suggested that they were a group of mendicant monks wandering around the Numidian plane visiting shrines. The name *circumcellion* means, 'those who wander around cells'.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, they seem to be a group who saw themselves as God's warriors (*agonistae*), saints of Christ whose mission it was to fight against the powers of this world and to implement God's judgments. They embody in an intense way, Donatist attitudes towards the 'world'. As Decret states:

The Circumcellions...were to forge their identity in the context of the oppressed Donatist church. it is very likely that these opposition efforts evolved, and that developing ideals captured the imagination of a new group of "fanatics," especially those seeking to imitate Axido and Fasir. Thus, the battle for social and economic justice of earlier days eventually gave way to a type of religious fanaticism. The

⁴⁷ AU Jo, 1.1. See also, AU Jo, 3.3; 6.13.

⁴⁸ See AU Jo, 7.3 for an example of the application of this passage in relation to Donatists. He clarifies his use of this by preceding it with, 'nullo modo autem possunt dicere se habere caritatem, qui diuidunt unitatem'. (CCSL, 36: 69). See also, AU ba, 1.12.

⁴⁹ AU Ps, 132.6, 'sed tamen dicere consueuerunt: quid sibi uult nomen monachorum? quanto melius dicimus nos: quid sibi uult nomen circellionum? sed non, inquit, uocantur circelliones. forte corrupto sono nominis eos appellamus. Dicturi sumus uobis integrum nomen ipsorum? forte circumcelliones uocantur, non circelliones. plane si hoc uocantur, exponent quid sint. nam circumcelliones dicti sunt, quia circum cellas uagantur: solent enim ire hac illac, nusquam habentes sedes; et facere quae nostis, et quae illi norunt, uelint, nolint.' (CCSL, 40: 1928).

acclamation *Deo laudes* (“God be praised”) became a war cry as well as a liturgical expression that began to appear quite often on their epitaphs. They also referred to themselves as *agonistae* (“God’s warriors”)⁵⁰

Augustine always refers to them as *circumcellion*, highlighting their misguided and feckless lifestyle (perhaps Augustine has 2 Thess 3:10-12 in mind, rooting his image of them in biblical references) as well as their misguided and uncharitable Christian aims.⁵¹ Fundamentally, they represent disaffected and disenfranchised Christians, primarily from Numidia who came to see Catholics as capitulators. The *circumcellion*, we are told, saw themselves as the military ‘saints’ who were at pains to preserve the identity and independence of the North African Church from State sponsored subjugation and corruption. Rarely did they seek the death of their victims, but rather brutal punishment. As Shaw observes:

Despite much rhetorical talk about murder and lethal slaughter, ordinarily anything but outright homicide was involved. Most attackers were not interested in killing the person whom they attacked, but rather, if we might put it in polite terms, in reshaping the body (and therefore the mind) of the enemy.⁵²

Shaw highlights a case in which two priests, Innocent who was beaten and whose eye was torn out and finger cut off along with Restitutus who appears to have died from his injuries.⁵³ In 411 Augustine appealed to Marcellinus concerning this case. Marcellinus, a devout Catholic and Imperial commissioner, who in that same year convened the conference of Carthage. Yet as Shaw

⁵⁰ Decret (2009), 108.

⁵¹ AU Gau, 1.32, ‘quis enim nescit hoc genus hominum in horrendis facinoribus inquietum, ab utilibus operibus otiosum, crudelissimum in mortibus alienis, uilissimum in suis, maxime in agris territans, ab agris uacans et uictus sui causa cellas circumiens rusticanas, unde et Circumcellionum nomen accepit, uniuerso mundo paene famosissimum Africani erroris opprobrium?’. (CSEL, 53: 231). Augustine also talks about their incitement of groups or individuals in order to be killed. For example, see AU ep, 185.12.

⁵² Shaw (2011), 683. AU ps Do, 157-160; ‘quia scriptum est: reconde gladium [Mt 26,52], scelus non putant in fuste, non ut homo non moriatur, sed ut conquassetur ualde et postea moriatur inde, iam cruciatus in languore. sed tamen si miserentur, occidunt et uno fuste.’ (Anastasi, 58). See also, AU Cre, 3.46.

⁵³ AU ep, 133.1.

notes in this case, the body parts are highly significant in that they denote both ‘disobedient’ behaviour connected with ‘betrayal, indeed a sharp sense of personal betrayal’.⁵⁴ Buildings also became the focus of this conflict. Augustine tells us that, ‘At Hasna where our brother, Argentius, is priest, the *circumcellion* invaded the basilica and smashed our altar’.⁵⁵ In 405 the Edict of Unity would be imposed in response to appeals over violence and vandalism of Catholic property by the *circumcellion*. It is suggested that the Imperial fever and the Donatist resistance to Imperial legislation was the result of Donatist support for Gildo.⁵⁶ It is true to say, as we shall see, that when Augustine talks about Donatist disunity in relation to ‘saints’ or ‘martyrs’ he has always the *circumcellion* in the back of his mind as an illustration of a un-charitable and therefore an unholy Christian life. All of this will be re-cast in the light of loves summit that is friendship with God in Christ. Nevertheless, the episode that forges the broadest backdrop of Donatists dissent came with its alignment with the revolutionary *Comes Africae* Gildo.

The Gildo affair came out of a social and political miscalculation by the State to enfranchise local tribal Kings to enforce order and manage the frontiers. Gildo only comes into the frame after his older brothers’ prior revolt against the State and the reluctance of Rome to be at the mercy of uncontrollable natives using the grain harvest as leverage. In 376 Nichomachus Flavian became Vicar of Africa and was said to have been a member of the Donatist Church.⁵⁷ Prior to this time the Donatists had few friends amongst the ruling classes and were harassed by the *Comes Romanus* of whom: ‘Few Imperial representatives in Africa left so evil a name’.⁵⁸ Nichomachus represents a friend amongst a ruling Catholic imperialism. Firmus and Gildo came from Berber stock of local

⁵⁴ Shaw (2011), 683. Augustine also tells us that they named their clubs, ‘Israheles’ denoting the notion of God’s justice. AU ps Do, 161.

⁵⁵ AU ep, 29.12 (WSA, II: 1), 100; ‘apud Asnam, ubi est presbyter frater Argentius, circumcelliones inuadentes basilicam nostram altare comminuerunt’. (CSEL, 34: 1,122).

⁵⁶ Hermanowicz (2008), 138; Hombert, (2000), 570.

⁵⁷ See, Tilley (1997), 130. Frend (1952), 200. AU ep, 87.8.

⁵⁸ Frend (1952), 197. Ammianus Marcellinus, 29.5.

nobility. It appears that the family of Firmus was first employed by the Empire to secure Roman interests and defend the territory. The revolt against Rome happened in 372; Zosimus records, ‘the Africans, who could not bear the avarice of the commander in Mauretania, bestowed the purple on Firmus and declared him emperor’.⁵⁹ Theodosius, Valentinian’s general and *Comes*,⁶⁰ was ordered to subjugate the Mauritanian and Numidian tribes in 373. With the Legions of Empire, the crushing weight of the Eagle swooped in to crush the revolt. After a lengthy pursuit Firmus was betrayed and captured and chose to end his life rather than be torn to pieces by the talons of the Empire.⁶¹ Theodosius was welcomed by Catholics for crushing the revolt. In 376 he was executed for treason and replaced by Nichomachus a Donatist. By 386 Gildo’s future was secured and he was promoted to *Comes Africae* for his faithful service. Gildo clearly had a sense of personal loyalty towards Theodosius and even secures his daughter Salvina’s marriage within the Imperial household.⁶² Despite his brief lapse of judgment in the Magnus Maximus affair,⁶³ he remained wedded to Theodosius’ rule. This did not extend to his sons who became ruler of East and West respectively, Honorius in the West and Arcadius in the East.

Gildo’s rule is a story of an opportunity missed, in that it could have served as a period of greater integration and compromise. Gildo would have been well placed to have achieved this as he was a pagan of Imperial backing with deep local connections. Prior to Gildo’s revolt, Donatists and Catholics on a local level had become well accustomed to a *status quo*. As Tilley observes, a relatively amicable ‘modus vivendi’ endured.⁶⁴ The revolt of Gildo represents the final major event in sealing the fate of Donatists in many ways. Theodosius died in 395; by 397 Gildo had revolted

⁵⁹ Ammianus Marcellinus 4.16.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 27.8.50-1.

⁶¹ Ibid, 29.5.51-4.

⁶² HI ep, 79.2.

⁶³ See, Williams and Friell, (1994), 36-46; Frend (1952), 208.

⁶⁴ See, Tilley, (1996), xvi; (1997), 132; ‘Introduction’, (WSA, I. 21), (2019), 14.

and was supported by the aggressively militant wing of Donatist bishops who occupied the most elevated sees and looked to Gildo as a means of emancipation from the Catholic State. Claudian describes the defeat of Gildo in the most glowing terms: ‘the tawny bird, armour-bearer of Jove, swoops down from the open sky and seizes a snake in his curved talons; and while the eagle tears his struggling prey with his hooked beak, his claws are embedded in its head.’⁶⁵ The memory of Firmus resounded within the Imperial psyche as Gildo shared his fate. Gildo, like his brother, suspended the grain shipments to Rome and the threat of rationing was once more contemplated.⁶⁶ Rome regarded grain shipments as tribute, failure to pay—treason.

A further complication to this was the fact that a new breed of capriciously self-obsessed individuals accustomed to violence and manipulation, ascended the two most prominent sees within Donatism—Carthage and Thamugadi. After the death of Parmenian in 392, Primian replaced him as Bishop of Carthage and Primate of the Donatist Church. Prior to this, in 388 Optatus, friend and ally of Primian, occupied the see of Thamugadi. Both of them became strong supporters of Gildo. As Frend states: ‘In alliance with Gildo the formation of a predominantly ‘native’, non-Roman power in Africa became possible: Donatism would have been the religion and motive force in such a kingdom. Even so, it was in these ten years between 388 and 398 that Donatism came nearest to achieving complete mastery of Africa.’⁶⁷ Nevertheless, this alliance with Gildo was a fatal error, in that Donatists, by association became ‘revolutionaries’.⁶⁸ The Donatist during the revolt of Gildo ruled by Primian the ‘*de iure primus inter pares*’.⁶⁹ Primian was a ‘man of

⁶⁵ Claudian, *De Bello Gildonico*, (LCL) 135, 132-3.

⁶⁶ The Empire both east and west was supplied by Egypt and Carthage respectively for grain. Claudian states: ‘We are fed at the pleasure of the Moor, who boasts that he (Gildo) does not repay a debt but that he gives us of his own, and rejoices to apportion out my daily food to me, as though I were his slave’, Ibid, 103-105. See Tilley (1997), 135.

⁶⁷ Frend (1952), 210.

⁶⁸ Tilley (1997), 134.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 133.

extreme views' and of dubious reputation. He was manipulative and enthusiastic about *circumcellion* violence. He persecuted his own dissenters mercilessly and exploited his power and authority. He was uncompromising with the Maximianist schism⁷⁰ within Donatism and ruthless with his enemies. Optatus of Thamugadi, was a great supporter of both Primian and Gildo. He was much more politically and pastorally sensitive than Primian, yet still accustomed to the employment of violence. Though Primian held the senior see, Optatus was far better connected and influential. Augustine describes him as: 'Gildonianus Optatus' due to his close association with Gildo.⁷¹ He could be pastorally sensitive and merciful to his opponents. Nevertheless, he was vain, erecting one of the largest Basilica in Numidia⁷² and prosecuted challenges to his authority with unbridled rage. He befalls the same fate as Primian, and both perished alongside the revolutionaries with the downfall of Gildo.

With the death of Gildo, Donatism was all but set for decline. Honorius restored the fortunes of Catholic landowners and bishops suppressed by the Gildonian revolt and imposed Imperial Catholic rule relentlessly. He restored the fortunes of Catholics who had found themselves victims of Donatist violence restoring their property.⁷³ Honorius from this point onwards would set his sights on completing the Theodosian reforms of Empire and would see Catholic Christianity not only as the official religion of Empire but the only tolerated body of belief. In 401 he installed a new *Comes Africa* in the form of Bathanarius. The Gildo affair was the last time native rulers played a part in the control and security of Africa. From the fall of Gildo, Donatists were viewed as revolutionary heretics, a prescription of which Catholic bishops, particularly Aurelius and Augustine, would make much use. Initially reluctant to incite laws against

⁷⁰ For an overview see, Shaw (2011), 107-145. Also see, AU Pet 1.11-20; AU ba, 2.16-18.

⁷¹ AU Cre, 4.31. Se also, AU Pet, 2.209.

⁷² Augustine describes him as presiding over affairs in vain pomposity: 'sed erat intus Optatus basiliscus, qui nutu quodam regali', AU Par, 2.7. For the Basilica as a display of Optatus' power see Frend (1952), 209.

⁷³ Frend (1952), 225.

heretics (C. Th, 16.5.21), by 417 Augustine had clearly made his peace with it, if not before. This law issued in 392 by Theodosius was aimed at Manicheans, however, as Hermanowicz observes: ‘All schism, every split within the Church, became heresy if it continued for too long’.⁷⁴ Augustine refers to the implementation of heresy laws against Donatists:

Who is unaware of the very harsh laws of the other emperors that were directed against them? Among them there is a general one against all who want to call themselves Christians and are not in communion with the Catholic Church but are gathered in their own separate assemblies; it says that either the ordained or a cleric or the cleric himself is to be fined ten pounds of gold, while the place itself where the impious dissidents congregate is to be appropriated by the treasury.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, the most decisive date for the fortunes of the Donatists would come in 411 when the Emperor would bring a concluding conference together to settle the issue of schism once and for all. Marcellinus,⁷⁶ an Imperial secretary and Tribune (C. Th, 16.5.55) was appointed to oversee the proceedings. His appointment was an extraordinary intervention by the State, second only to the missions of Paul and Macarius. Marcellinus was a devout Catholic and became a friend of Augustine after the conference. He was chosen for his fairness and professional acumen. The Conference of Carthage was set to be the final showdown between the two parties. Nevertheless, the *Tractatus* was written well before those proceedings and we must first briefly outline Augustine’s journey with this seemingly intractable problem for both Church and State.

⁷⁴ Hermanowicz (2008), 130.

⁷⁵ AU Par, 1.19 (WSA, I: 21), 291-2; ‘aliorum autem imperatorum leges quam uehementes aduersus eos latae sint quis ignorat? in quibus una generalis aduersus omnes, qui se Christianos dici uolunt et ecclesiae catholicae non communicant, sed suis separatis conuenticulis congregantur, id continet, ut uel ordinator clerici uel ipse ordinatus denis libris auri multentur, locus uero ipse quo impia separatio congregatur redigatur in fiscum sunt et aliae iussiones generales’. (CSEL, 51: 41).

⁷⁶ For the record of the proceedings see either Walter De Gruyter, *Collatio Carthaginensis Anni 411; Gesta Collationis Carthagensis Augustinus, Breviculus Collationis Augustinus, As Donatistas Post Collationem*, Clemens Weidmann, ed, 2018, CSEL, 104, or Serge Lancel, ed, *Actes de la Conférence de Carthage en 411*, 4 Vols, in SC, 194, 195, 224, 373, 1972-91; AU ep, 128; 129; 133; 136; 138; 139; 143. For secondary sources see, Frend (1952), 275-89; Hermanowicz (2008), 192-220; Shaw (2011), 544-586.

Augustine and the Donatists

Augustine himself tells us that his hometown was once entirely Donatist before it knew unity. Concerning his hometown of Thagaste he writes: ‘Though it was entirely in the Donatists sect, it was converted to the Catholic unity out of fear of the Imperial laws’.⁷⁷ How much he knew about the Donatists during his formative years is unclear, yet it is unlikely that he had never heard of them as he had relatives who were members.⁷⁸ During the time of his adolescence, families were often comprised of both Catholics and Donatists. Children played together and the general populace would have rubbed along with their neighbours with relative ease—a ‘modus vivendi’. As in most societies, political and religious wrangling were often superseded by more pressing issues of everyday life. Augustine was fully aware of this disparity between the top and bottom of society. This came well before Augustine entered into the centre ground on which the pamphlet wars had long been fought.⁷⁹ The debate that Augustine inherited was fought by two titans, Optatus who fought for the Catholic cause and Parmenian (362-391?) who ably defended the schism. Parmenian was a non-native of Africa⁸⁰ and arguably the most able and gifted defender of Donatism throughout its history. His writings and works were ‘canon’ in the Donatist arsenal. So influential was the leadership of Parmenian, that it is hard to over-emphasise his contribution. He was a gifted theologian and orator as well as a prolific producer of treatise and tracts. No one in Africa after his arrival dealt with Donatism without having to contend with Parmenian and his writings. In many ways Parmenian’s tenure as Primate was instrumental in retaining their identity and internal integrity as a Church apart from the world. Indeed, Augustine’s first dealing with the

⁷⁷ AU ep, 93.17 (WSA, II: 1), 387; ‘quae cum tota esset in parte Donati. ad unitatem catholicam legum imperialium timore conuersa est’. (CSEL, 34: 2,462). On Augustine’s attitude to imperial coercion see Brown, (1972), 260-278.

⁷⁸ AU ep, 52.

⁷⁹ See Shaw (2011), 433-40.

⁸⁰ OPT 3.3.

man came out of a treatise Parmenian had written against a critic of his by the name of Tyconius whom Augustine both admired and utilised his exegetical 'Rule'.⁸¹

The theological debate between the two sides is where Augustine came into his own. The Imperial pressure and the legal instruments to Augustine were but aids to a much more profound and penetrating issue. In many ways, Augustine was not as invested as his mentor, Ambrose, in the interests of the State, yet the 'fear' of it provided rich soil for conversion. Augustine simply saw the State as aiding the mission of God whereas Ambrose had viewed the State as far more instrumental and integral to the process of Christianisation and the consolidation of Catholic unity. Nevertheless, Augustine, under the friendly direction of Aurelius, saw in his time an opportunity for consolidating the mission of bringing Catholic unity to the whole of North Africa. Augustine would employ all of his intellect, energy and rhetorical prowess in the conversion of Africa to Catholic unity. Two ballasts of the faith held the key to this aim, 1) He needed to show how Scripture displayed his call and that the ultimate authority of them rested in his favour. 2) That the tradition of Africa, writers, and martyrs, bore a greater emphasis on unity rather than separation. These two foundations of the faith had to be demonstrated if he was going to capitalise on converting Imperial pressure into Catholic unity.

Augustine began his engagement with the issue of Donatism a few years after his ordination to the Presbyterate. His earliest work, the *Psalm against the Party Donatus*, the Donatists, was written in 393. During this period, the 'modus vivendi' held and peace was relatively secure. Yet, with the passing of Parmenian just prior to this and the new wave of both Catholic protagonist and Donatist assertion, the tolerance of the past began to fall away. By the time we reach Augustine's more pointed and theological works (399-404) the Catholic cause began to capitalise on the unfolding disaster befalling the Donatists. The main works of Augustine begin when he takes up the mantle Optatus of Milevis had laid down. In 400 Augustine began responding to

⁸¹ AU do, 3.42-56.

Petilian, Donatist bishop of Cirta (Constantine), *Answer to the Writings of Petilian* (400-404), and responded to a letter written by Parmenian to Tyconius concerning the nature of their schism, *Answer to the Letter of Parmenian* (c393-400). Following this letter, Augustine was to publish his treatise *On Baptism* (400-405). These three works in particular forge the nucleus of Augustine's anti-Donatist works. By the time we arrive at the formation of his tractates on John, much of the theological groundwork was laid and his retorts established.

The major concern for the Donatists was integrity and purity. The issue of *traditores* exposed a residual fear of the Church becoming polluted by the world. For Donatists, the issue of contamination was key. Based upon the writings and witness of their hero Cyprian, Donatists appealed to him as their plumb-line as to what the Church must prioritise in the face of persecution. Cyprian wrote of a Church that should be hostile to lenient treatment for those who had capitulated, those who had sacrificed to the Emperor or purchased their *libelli* (a certificate attesting to their having offered the sacrifice) required by the State.⁸² Those guilty of such sacrilegious acts were expelled from the Church as *lapsi*, those who had 'lapsed'. Cyprian, head of the rigorist cause urged the Church to stay pure—to not allow the world and its sin to enter into the body of Christ. Cyprian was also adamant that those baptised outside the Church had no valid sacrament conferred upon them. They would have to be authentically baptised by one who belonged to the true Church—one who had not polluted himself (a Bishop) and had retained the Spirit. Cyprian famously stated:

confess this, that all either heretics or schismatics do not have the Holy Spirit and, therefore, can baptize but they cannot give the Holy Spirit, in that very matter they are held by us that we may show that those who do not have the Holy Spirit cannot baptize at all.⁸³

⁸² As Roy Deferrari notes in his 'Introduction' to *Saint Cyprians Treatises*, FC 36; 'At this time the majority of the Christians at Carthage apostatized. Some, to be sure, refused to sacrifice but instead purchased *libelli* or certificates testifying that they had done so, and thus were called *libellatici*. There were several thousand of these at Carthage.', vii.

⁸³ CY ep, 69.10 (FC, 51), 251.

Nevertheless, Augustine though he utilised Cyprian to his advantage, always held him accountable to the gospel and to the authority of the Church:

“Because even Peter, who once supported circumcision, gave way to Paul when he preached the truth,” he indicated quite clearly that something else also used to be done in case of baptism. At the same time he makes us aware as well that, if even Peter could think differently, in a way not consonant with the truth that we learn from Paul, the apostle and teacher, it was not impossible that Cyprian might have thought differently about baptism than what the truth required, which was maintained by the Church both before him and after him⁸⁴

Against the Donatist claim to purity, Augustine would challenge these theological principals by asserting that sins unknown would equally invalidate the sacraments⁸⁵ and that Cyprian even though at odds with the Chair of Peter (Pope Stephen), valued unity with the Church above all things. ‘For [Cyprian], while in his zeal for God solemnly denouncing those who separated themselves from unity, thought that they were also separated from baptism itself. But [the Donatists], thinking that it is only a minor offence that they themselves have been separated from the unity of Christ’⁸⁶ Like Optatus before him, Augustine would also challenge the premise for the Schism, that of the crime of *traditores*.⁸⁷ Augustine sees the Bishops, those who confer the sacraments, as only ministers of them, not possessors of them; the sacraments belong to Christ

⁸⁴ AU ba, 3.(7)10 (WSA, I: 21), 447; ‘reuelatione facta ueritatis cedat error ueritati, quia et Petrus qui prius circumcidebat cessit Paulo ueritatem praedicanti . noluit quidem iste dicere consuetudinem, sed errorem; uerumtamen cum dicit: quia et Petrus qui prius circumcidebat cessit Paulo ueritatem praedicanti, satis indicat quod aliud etiam de baptismo fieri solebat. simul et ammonet nos non fuisse impossibile, ut de baptismo Cyprianus aliquid aliter saperet quam ueritas postulabat. quae ab ecclesia et ante illum et post illum retenta est, si potuit aliquid etiam Petrus aliter sapere quod ueritas non habebat, quam Paulo apostolo doctore didicimus’. (CSEL, 51: 204). See also, AU ba, 4.(2)3.

⁸⁵ An excellent example of this is Augustine’s *Contra litteras Petilianis*, Book 3.

⁸⁶ AU ba, 6.(1).2 (WSA, I: 21), 534; ‘quia Cypriano uisum est ab haereticis uenientes denuo baptizari oportere, laudanda in tanto uiro auersatur et emendanda sectatur nec ea ipsa quae sectatur adsequitur. ille enim dum zelo dei grauiter detestatur eos, qui se ab unitate separauerunt’. (CSEL, 51: 299).

⁸⁷ OPT, ‘Appendix Two’, THS; AU Par, 1.1-6.

and are conferred by him alone.⁸⁸ Thus, the sins of the administrator (Bishop) are rendered insignificant: ‘Let us love Christ’s peace; let us rejoice in unity, If there are wicked people in the Church, they can’t harm us’.⁸⁹ He will also claim that sacraments only hold validity through unity within the ‘Church found everywhere’ and as we shall see, being bound within the Trinity is key to Augustine’s understanding of the Church and of true Christian friendship. For, ‘Without the charity of Christ’s unity, in fact, all of Christ’s sacraments are possessed not for salvation but for judgment’.⁹⁰ Sacraments are gifts for those who are his friends, bound within the unity of his body through the Spirit who is *caritas*. Only in Christ does one enter into holy fellowship, for ‘*Christum esse medium trinitatis*’.⁹¹

Augustine understands the Church as a fulfilment of prophecy and that it extends all over the world. The notion that the true Church only exists in Africa is absurd and goes against everything the *Catholica Ecclesia* is. Indeed, he takes head on Donatist exegesis and theology that only the Church in Africa survives. In his *Letter to Catholics on the Sect of the Donatists*⁹² Augustine begins a section on refuting this claim with a common North African text denoting the Church, the Song of Songs. Augustine’s exegesis demonstrates that Donatist claims are not validated by Scripture but are rather refuted by them. Indeed Augustine, concerning this claim through the lens of this portion of Scripture denoting the Church by asserting a juxta positioning: ‘For how much better and more privately might the Son of God be said to pasture and lie down, that is, take his rest, there than amid the unquiet crowd of insane circumcellions, which is an evil that is Africa’s

⁸⁸ AU Pet, 3. (36)42.

⁸⁹ AU ps Do (WSA, I: 21), 41; ‘nos amemus pacem Christi, gaudeamus in unitate’.
(Anastasi, 58/167).

⁹⁰ AU Pet, 3. (40)46.

⁹¹ AU Pet, 3. (40)48, (CSEL, 50: 201).

⁹² AU Do, *Epistula ad Catholicos de secta Donatistarum*, or as it sometime confusingly referred to as, *Catholicos fratres/De unitate ecclesiae*. (CSEL, 52: 231-322).

alone!’⁹³ There are numerous examples of this. However, for Augustine as for Optatus before him, the prophecy concerning the Church is that it will and has encompassed the whole world, not just Africa. For Augustine, the Church is a universal enterprise, a *societatis unitate*, a community whose constitution and gifts are bestowed by God to his friends incorporate within His own body. The theological approach for Augustine is centred upon this point, that the whole world can become friends with God—only within the one true *societatis unitate*:

Accept something from the sacred scriptures, by which you may be able to grasp in some way what is being said. After our Lord Jesus Christ had risen, and had ascended into heaven when he wished, and, ten days later, had sent from heaven the Holy Spirit, those who were together in one hall, filled with the Holy Spirit, began to speak in the languages of all nations. Terrified at the miracle, the Lord’s murderers were goaded into sorrow; in sorrow they changed, and through change they believed; they were added to the body of the Lord, that is, to the number of the faithful, three thousand of them. After another miracle, some five thousand more joined them; thus, was formed a single, considerable people, in which all received the Holy Spirit who kindled spiritual love in them and bound them together as one by that charity and fervour of spirit. Thus people began, within the unity of that fellowship, to sell what they had and to lay the money at the feet of the apostles, for distribution to each according to each one’s need. And this is what scripture says about them, that *they had one soul and one heart in God* (Acts 4:32).⁹⁴

This notion of divine unity exercised within a world full of diversity, chimes with Augustine’s theological notion of the doctrine of the Trinity and how humanity is, on earth, integrated into the divine befriending act of the incarnation. This opens up the pouring out of the

⁹³ AU Do, 16.41 (WSA, I: 21), 653, ‘quanto enim melius ibi secretius pascere et cubare, id est requiescere, filius dei diceretur quam in turbis inquietis furiosorum Circumcellionum, quod malum Africae proprium est’. (CSEL 52: 286).

⁹⁴ AU Jo, 39.5 (WSA, I: 12), 589-90; ‘accipite aliquid de scripturis sanctis, unde hoc quod dicitur utcumque capiat. posteaquam dominus noster Iesus Christus resurrexit, et cum uoluit adscendit in caelum, decem diebus illic impletis misit inde spiritum sanctum; quo impleti qui aderant in conclaui uno, omnium gentium linguis coeperunt loqui. miraculo exterriti domini interfectores, compuncti doluerunt, dolentes mutati sunt, mutati crediderunt; accesserunt corpori domini, id est numero fidelium, tria millia hominum. item alio facto quodam miraculo, accesserunt alia quinque millia; facta est plebs una non parua, in qua omnes accepto spiritu sancto, quo amor spiritalis accensus est, caritate ipsa et feruore spiritus in unum redacti, coeperunt in ipsa societatis unitate uendere omnia quae habebant, et pretia ponere ad pedes apostolorum, ut distribueretur unicuique, sicut cuique opus erat. et hoc de illis scriptura dicit, quod erat eis anima una et cor unum in deum’. (CCSL, 36: 347).

Holy Spirit which incorporates individuals into a divine society that is the Church.⁹⁵ What Augustine means by this, is that the relationship which is expressed and in the central exchange within the Trinity of love is through the Church, by the merits of Christ extended towards humanity through the Church. Friendship for Augustine is the highest form of union between two beings: *'Iam non dicam vos servos: quia servus nescit quid faciat dominus eius. vos autem dixi amicos: quia omnia quaecumque audiui a Patre meo, nota feci vobis.'* (Jn 15:15). Therefore, this incarnational befriending is only extended between those within the unity of the one holy and universal society. Those on the outside may be Christians—but they could not be friends of Christ for they reside outside of his body which alone is bound within the life of the being of the Trinity. Augustine will sum this up in a phrase—the *totus Christus*.⁹⁶

Summary

The context of Augustine's involvement of the Donatist schism is highly conditioned by the history that has gone before him. This is particularly true when it comes to the Donatist and Catholic attitudes alike in their respective worldviews concerning the role of the State as either an enemy or instrument of God's providence. These respective visions became further compounded and fixed as the State went from a *persecutionem modus* towards a *modus acceptio*. As the State moved toward a Christian epoch, Donatists found themselves further estranged and alienated. The seeds for this process of alienation is rooted in both the Decian and Valerian persecution and that of the

⁹⁵ I just want to add a note of caution here that this must not be confused with contemporary notions associated with liberation theology which draws a parallel between human society and the divine life in a porous stream of thought. That the two ontological spheres can be so closely associated and that the divine life is a model for the human is not what Augustine has in mind. Such contemporary notions have been challenged and are in themselves fraught with theological inconsistencies. An excellent critique of the contemporary perichoretic notion of the divine life and human society is offered by Peters (1993).

⁹⁶ See, 'Introduction', fn22; Ch4, fn84.

epicentre of the schism the disputed election of Caecilian. Through the Imperial impulse to unify the Empire the die was cast in Constantine's support for Caecilian. The subsequent years further unfolded as a series of catastrophes for the Donatists who found themselves universally unsupported by both the wider Church and State. With the arrival of Theodosius, the Empire arrived at the near summit of an entirely Catholic and faithful populace. With the death of Theodosius, the revolt of Gildo and the will of the western Emperor Honorius to make Catholic Christianity the only religion of Empire, Donatism slips from view. This later history is where Augustine enters into the fray and with a small band of Catholic Bishops seeking to capitalise upon the favourability of the State.

With the comfort of his friends and the fidelities of Empire, Augustine sought to convert Imperial pressure into Catholic unity. Augustine was in many ways a product of Empire, both culturally and emotionally. However, this was caveated by a notion of a shared space of both sinner and saint. Nevertheless, his entire formation is indebted to the classical world of late Roman antiquity. We see this clearly in his notions of what it means to be a Bishop and how he understands friendship in terms of 'agreement', as we shall see. Augustine particular set of gifts, his intellect and rhetorical genius finds new *telos* as a Bishop of the Catholic Church. Augustine brings to the debate an intense theological clarity and a will to win over those who called themselves Christians to a unified society and united fellowship, a community of continuity, conformity and one that was truly universal, pluralistic and 'whole':

Certainly, the question at issue between us is where the Church is, whether with us or with them. In any case it is one, which our forebears called 'Catholic.' Thus, by its very name they showed that it is everywhere, since in Greek καθ' ὅλον means "according to the whole." This Church is the body of Christ, as the Apostle says, For the sake of his body, which is the Church (Col 1:24). Hence it is clear indeed that anyone who is not among the members of Christ cannot have Christian salvation. But the members

of Christ are joined to one another through the charity of unity, and through that same [charity] they cling to its head, which is Christ Jesus.⁹⁷

We now turn to Augustine's formation in friendship and how this Imperial attitude of conformity and 'agreement' finds its expression in his notion of what it means to be friends and how friendship finds itself expressed as the summit of love. We shall see how Augustine moves through the many stages of his development of friendship in relation to love and how that comes to rest upon his notion of divine befriending of the God who is love (1 Jn 4:8).⁹⁸ For Augustine, true Christian friendship is the summit of *caritas Dei*, the effulgence of fidelity to the body of Christ—the Church.

⁹⁷ AU Do, (2)2 (WSA, I.21), 607; 'quaestio certe inter nos uersatur ubi sit ecclesia, utrum apud nos an apud illos. quae utique una est quam maiores nostri catholicam nominarunt, ut ex ipso nomine ostenderent quia per totum est; secundum totum enim καθ' ὅλον Graece dicitur. haec autem ecclesia corpus Christi est, sicut dicit apostolus: pro corpore eius, quae est ecclesia [Col 1,24]. unde utique manifestum est eum, qui non est in membris Christi, christianam salutem habere non posse. membra uero Christi per unitatis caritatem sibi copulantur et per eandem capiti suo cohaerent, quod est Christus Iesus. (CSEL, 52: 232).

⁹⁸ AU Jo, 9.8.

Chapter 2

The Ties that Bind: Family, Friends and Friendship

sed nondum erat sic amicus, quamquam ne tunc quidem sic,
uti est uera amicitia, quia non est uera, nisi cum
eam tu agglutinas inter haerentes tibi caritate diffusa in cordibus
nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis [Rm 5,5]

Confessionum 4.7¹

Et factum est cum complesset loqui ad Saul,
anima Ionathae conglutinata est animae David,
et dilexit eum Ionathas quasi animam suam

I Samuelis 18.1²

Introduction

In this chapter we trace the development of Augustine's understanding of friendship and the role of friends through his writings. Initially we explore the adolescent lover of friends in relation to his family connections as presented within the *Confessions*. We then move onto the development of how, under the watchful gaze of his family and those whom he is placed under, what it means to become treasured citizen of Empire. Initially we see how Augustine emerges from a rather sterile and unreflective understanding of friendship towards an increasingly mature and meaningful apprehension. Through his formative relationships he begins to develop and to discover a deeper notion of his thirst for friends and their

¹ AU cf, 4.7, 56; 'He was then not yet my friend, and when he did become so, it was less than a true friendship which is not possible unless you bond together those who cleave to one another by the love which 'is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us' (Rom. 5: 5)'. (CCSL, 27: 43).

² 'When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. (NRSV).

importance in his life. From a rather self-indulgent understanding of the role of others, Augustine becomes ever more steeped in the classical notions of what forges true friendship which draws him from his incidental and expedient past to a more reflective and metaphysical matrix of friends as part of his inner life and journey. We see through his connection with Cicero's writings, a further maturation of the philosophical and grammatical ideas and visions that furnish his ongoing advancement in his thoughts and reflections of friends and friendships. His conversion to Manichaeism marks a watershed moment as it connects and crystallises the Ciceronian maxim of agreement: '*Est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio*',³ within a framework of *religio*—sacred binding.⁴ The death of the unnamed friend stands out as a moment in which we see all the strands of friendship joined together, highlighting these elemental advancements before he finally enters into the Catholic Church. It is in the final step of entering the Catholic Church that Augustine arrives, as he sees it, into the arms of Wisdom herself in the person of Christ the Son of God. Within this new dynamic that becomes ever more imbedded within a theology of incarnation, friendship becomes increasingly ecclesial in nature. Thus, God in Christ becomes the keystone, the one who forges friendship with humanity. It is this incarnational character that reflects Christ as the Church itself that becomes the foundation of friendship sustained by the gift of the Spirit given at baptism and sustained in sacramental unity.

We shall see how friendship becomes an essential element in his notion of salvation and as a significant sign in one's training in a cultivating praxis of 'moral epistemology'.⁵ Belief for Augustine, was only one half of the Ciceronian maxim of 'agreement' with humanity,

³ For an excellent analysis of this Ciceronian maxim's use in Augustine see, van Bavel (1987), 60-1.

⁴ See, AU qua, 80.

⁵ See, Ployd (2015), 23-30.

belonging was the other. This takes us to the position of his engagement with the Donatists and how friendship for Augustine is exclusively held within the bosom of Christ (Jn 1:18), whose body extends to the Church—the *totus Christus*. It is within this participation of the Body of Christ through the Spirit that forges the binding between its members and Christ who is the head. For Augustine, the Donatists like many of those who claim truth do not possess it as they have not entered into the life of Christ and become his friends. Augustine's initial life with friends was about unity with himself through the participation of conjoined *anima*. As a member of the 'Church found everywhere', Augustine finds that true summit of love who binds the many into one. To not be friends with the members of the body of Christ was for him to be no friend of Christ and thus no friend of God. Those beyond the bounds of the Church claimed the title 'Christian' but did not have love because they did not participate within the exchange of the Spirit which binds *omnia in omnibus* (1 Cor. 15:28).

Augustine, Family and his Formation

Anyone who has studied saint Augustine, knows that within the depths of his being his formative years, belied a spiritual catastrophe. A pervasive sense of self estrangement expressed in his vivid *memoria*: 'I have become a problem to myself, and that is my sickness'.⁶ In his inner most being, Augustine was acutely aware of the fragility of life and of his place within it. This awareness underpins in a general way his theology, particularly his understanding of human nature. He was a man often prone to tears and bouts of melancholy, a strange absence from his sense of self often consumed him. Eventually, Christ would provide the light in which he would not only see himself clearly but also everything else: 'Accordingly, let me confess what I know of myself. Let me confess too what I do not know

⁶ AU cf, 10.(33)50, 208; 'mihi quaestio factus sum, et ipse est languor meus'. (CCSL, 27: 182).

of myself. For what I know of myself I know because you grant me light, and what I do not know of myself, I do not know until such time as my darkness becomes “like noonday” before your face (Isa. 58: 10)’.⁷

Nevertheless, prior to his conversion to Christianity (as well as being a Christian), Augustine treated various worldviews and friendships as a system and source of internal ballasting. This ‘ballasting’ enabled him to both stabilise his internal *absentia* and stabilise his consuming inner instability. This seemingly incurable chaotic inner convulsion and self-estranging aspect of his life was the pervasive desire for fulfilment which fuelled his appetite for an ever-deeper union with friends and his voracious appetite for friendship. Friends were an essential component of his self-healing agenda. For as many have long recognised, Augustine was always a ‘lonely man’;⁸ one who often felt empty without others. Indeed, the opening sentence in Peter Brown’s brief chapter on ‘Friends’ captures this: ‘Augustine will never be alone’.⁹ One ponders a sense of estrangement so profound from his family from an early age and those around him. It seems that in his very early experience of life something deeply affected him. Even his mother, the great Monica, though reconciled to her through his conversion to Catholic Christianity, never substituted or replaced his desire for friends. Even in preparation for baptism at his friend Verecundus’ retreat house in Cassiciacum (see below), Monica was the ‘honoured’ yet still an ancillary guest, amongst an intense atmosphere of intellectual male elitism. In many ways his embrace of Catholic Christianity intertwines his relationship with his family and friends in a new and dynamic way (see below). That said,

⁷ AU cf, 10.(5)7, 182-3; ‘confitear ergo quid de me sciam, confitear et quid de me nesciam, quoniam et quod de me scio, te mihi lucente scio, et quod de me nescio, tandiu nescio, donec fiant tenebrae meae sicut meridies [Is 58,10] in uultu tuo’. (CCSL, 27: 158).

⁸ Van Der Meer (1961), 3; Brown (2000), 50.

⁹ Ibid.

friends for Augustine occupied a particularly elevated position, they were the crowning glory of loves mysteries—his most precious inner possessions.

Within the story of his life we can look at Augustine's understanding of friendship through certain periods.¹⁰ What we find in assessing Augustine's developing understanding of friendship, is that, at its core, was a fundamental principle of a binding together. This understanding never changed throughout his life, it remained stable. What changed, was the way in which that was achieved and ultimately, in what it was instituted. In other words, friendship was what love does or creates. What was crucial was what it was forged in. Quite simply, this would become a matter of *concupiscence* or *caritas*. Friendship was not ontological; it was where love rested—what it was forged in, that was what made the difference. This would eventually become increasingly linked to the incarnation and thus to the Trinity. The God who in Christ be-friends humanity, binding all into the very life of the Trinity. Yet before he would eventually rest in the bosom of Christ through his Church, Augustine would sojourn the winding road of various worldviews circulating in the air of the Empire. Nevertheless, his language of friends and friendship remained deeply influenced by classical ideals through his love of Cicero and Latin literature. This immersion into the classical norms of the prescribed institution of friendship came at an early age. This development began during his studies at Madauros at age twelve to study the 'three R's' under the stewardship of the *grammatici* (grammarians).¹¹ Friends, from this time became increasingly important for Augustine from his days as a young student—even more so, it may be said, than his family. Indeed, as Cicero stated himself, as well as contemporary commentators have noted: 'Friendship, however, is distinct from family ties and is stronger than they are. Although affection may disappear between members of a family, their kinship lives on; if affection is eliminated from friendship,

¹⁰ Fiske (1964), 127. Lane-Fox (2015), 62-69.

¹¹ AU cf, 1.20.

the whole relationship disappears'.¹² From this period on, Augustine turned increasingly away from his family ties, often reducing their relationship to that of mere utility. He was prone to stealing from them¹³ and had only love for himself and for self-success.¹⁴ Yet reflecting upon his youth and soaring aptitude and ability for learning, he stated years later: 'I hated to be deceived, I developed a good memory, I acquired the armoury of being skilled with words, friendship softened me, I avoided pain, despondency, ignorance'.¹⁵ Friends gave focus to his life, they became the means by which he remained rooted to himself—friendship replaced in some sense his reliance upon his family for intimacy, affection and support. Friendship became a far more potent force from his recalcitrant youth than family ties, remaining so until his death.

In many ways, these formative years set the pattern of his vision of the hierarchy of relationships in his understanding of love. For Augustine, friendship was—and remained the zenith of what love *achieved*, the heights of intimate union of the *animus*.¹⁶ 'The single desire that dominated my search for delight was simply to love and to be loved. But no restraint was imposed by the exchange of mind with mind (*animo usque ad animum*), which marks the brightly lit pathway of friendship'.¹⁷ Ultimately, this stemmed from his view of himself as in need of fulfilling. One could argue that Augustine was in many ways a 'golden child', for whom his

¹² McNamara (1958), 25; Cicero, *Amic*, 5. 19.

¹³ AU cf, 1.30.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ AU cf, 1.31, 22; 'falli nolebam, memoria uigebam, locutione instruebar, amicitia mulcebar, fugiebam dolorem, abiectiorem, ignorantiam'. (CCSL, 27: 17).

¹⁶ I want to draw attention to the term here of '*animus/anima*'. It is translated as 'mind/soul/spirit'. I have deliberately left the term untranslated as in translating it here, is to simply to reduce this is a term such as 'mind/soul/spirit' reduces it to an interpretation much narrower than Augustine would have understood.

¹⁷ AU cf, 2.2, 24; 'sed non tenebatur modus ab animo usque ad animum, quatenus est luminosus limes amicitiae', (CCSL, 27: 18). Similar sentiments are also found in Cicero's *DeAm* 6.22: 'Nam et secundas res splendidiore facit amicitia, et adversas, partiens communicansque, leviores'. (LCL, 154) 132-133.

family suffered hardship in order that he reach his potential.¹⁸ There is no indication that Navigius, the younger brother had any of Augustine's aptitude¹⁹. We see this amongst his communal friends at Cassiciacum. It also appears that Augustine in some sense was the one whom his family had an enormous amount invested in him. It had clearly been impressed upon him that he should succeed in his education, in order to attain status and wealth that his wider family and associates should benefit:

I was dependant on the authority of my parents and the direction of adult people...What delusions when in my boyhood it was set before me as my moral duty in life to obey those who admonished me with the purpose that I should succeed in this world, and should excel in the arts of using my tongue to gain access to human honours and to acquire deceitful riches.²⁰

From this passage we glimpse that the burden of fulfilling one's 'moral duty' was impressed upon him by both his parent and his teachers. This notion of utility or pleasure alone was well known in the ancient world as a fundamental flaw in converting any relationship into a meaningful friendship.²¹ Yet, we see an acknowledgement that his relationships outside his close friends were rooted in necessity, based upon social and family

¹⁸ See, AU cf, 2.5-6.

¹⁹ In the dialogue with Navigius in AU vit, I. 7, Augustine is clearly the one with an elevated intellectual position and his brother the subordinate. It is also noteworthy that Augustine's tone is mildly disparaging of his brother's contribution in a way that suggests subordination to his friends. Augustine also sees his brother as slightly undermining as a sibling can often be in the presence of one's friends, for: 'Nauigius deberet splene uitioso', (CCSL, 29: 73).

²⁰ AU cf, 1.13-14, 11; 'sum pendens ex parentum auctoritate nutuque maiorum hominum...quandoquidem recte mihi uiuere puero id proponebatur, obtemperare monentibus, ut in hoc saeculo florerem et excellerem linguosis artibus ad honorem hominum et falsas diuitias famulantibus', (CCSL, 27: 8).

²¹ A good example of this is Aristotle, whom Cicero aligns himself closely with in his ideals of friendship: 'Now those who love each other for their utility do not love each other for themselves but in virtue of some good which they get from each other. So too with those who love for the sake of pleasure'. For Aristotle, all such friendships were 'incidental'. *Eth. nic.*, 8.3. Cicero, states: 'If it were simple expediency that cemented friendship together (*Nam si utilitas amicitias congutinaaret*), a change in what is expedient would dissolve them. Cicero, *Amic.* 11.36.

expectations. To be educated was to offer oneself (or be offered by one's patrons) to belong to a special class of citizenship. The education system throughout the Empire, both East and West was universal and was well established, centuries before Augustine (Isocrates, 436-388 BC). It provided a particular class of 'elites', whose prerogative it was to interpret and to shape culture and create the atmosphere everyone breathed. As Carol Harrison observes, this educational curriculum produced: 'a group of citizens who shared a common formation, culture, or *paideia*, and who could communicate with each other in the confidence that they would be recognised as fellow members of a prestigious and privileged elite.'²² It has been noted for some time, that the country dweller had a very limited education and that the cities provide the facilities for those who wish to ascend in this rigidly stratified society. Augustine's parents clearly held the view that he should be inducted in this class of citizenship. He nevertheless yearned for that which was more real, a far more substantial basis for a loving relationship based upon mutual likeness and affection. Above all, something more substantial than himself or those of his kinsfolk. The seed of an intellectual life with friends was sown there. Love for him was centred upon the pursuit of the good, and he would not rest until he had found its truthful source. One could have a multitude of relational ties to others—friendship was love's crowning glory whose ultimate expression was found in the source of goodness itself.

We do not know about his sibling's education, yet we can postulate that Augustine was probably the eldest son. If so, it can be assumed that he was a child set apart for greatness—one who was set to bring about a change in fortune for his entire family and fellow countrymen. This may explain why his family had sought the financial backing of his

²² Harrison (2013), 39.

landlord²³ and local grandee, Romanianus, in order to complete his education at Carthage.²⁴ The family had invested beyond their means for the future their son was destined for and local patronage from Romanianus would have also come with expectations regarding his investment. Nevertheless, Romanianus did become one of Augustine's closest friends, who invested not only his wealth into Augustine's life but also a huge amount of personal authority. The utility of their relationship soon blossomed into a substantial friendship: 'When I lost my father, you comforted me with your friendship, gave me life with your advice, and helped me from your resources'.²⁵ Augustine came to consider him part of his inner circle: 'From my earliest years he had been a most intimate friend'²⁶ one who wandered with Augustine through Manichaeism. Perhaps Augustine rebelled against his family in his youth, particularly when he went to Carthage to study at university because he felt his life was not his own, it had become a commodity that others had invested in. Perhaps this atmosphere amplified the question in Augustine, 'where is love?'. Certainly, this was bound up with the notion of 'returning to myself', which Augustine (in a Plotinian manner) synonymises as an inner fulfilment. Nevertheless, we can see that he clearly felt the presence of his family, at times, a hindrance. He would even abandon his mother on the beach at Carthage so that he could sail away to Italy.²⁷ His father is spoken of in impassive prose, his language towards his mother is a stark contrast to this, whom he displays great respect and affection towards. We shall see, friendship ultimately becomes a matter of belonging to Christ, something his father

²³ Chadwick (1991), n41, 49.

²⁴ AU cf, 4.12. See Chadwick, (1991), n16, 60.

²⁵ AU Ac, 2.3 (ACW, 12), 67; 'tu patre orbatum amicitia consolatus es, hortatione animasti, ope adiuuisti; tu in nostro ipso municipio fauore familiaritate communicatione domus tuae paene tecum clarum primatemque fecisti'. (CCSL, 29: 19).

²⁶ AU cf, 6.24, 108; 'ab ineunte aetate mihi familiarissimus', (CCSL, 27: 89). The term here, 'familiarissimus' can be translated as, 'familiarity, intimacy...intimate acquaintance', but also, 'friendship', which within the context of the narrative is clearly in mind. See, 'fāmīliāritas' in, L&S, 724.

²⁷ AU cf, 5.15, 81.

never did. His mother on the other hand is the one through whose tears grace was outpoured.²⁸ When it comes to Augustine's relationship to his mother it is entirely possible, with a degree of speculation, that Monica singled Augustine out as the favourite—she clearly takes an overbearing interest in his affairs and before his conversion she was clearly someone whom he felt at times, suffocating and interfering. Yet, the credit and kudos she receives from him for her persistent and simple devotion to Christ wins through. His love for her would be re-cast in the light of his conversion like everything else in his life. In the end of course, she receives the highest of accolades, but only after he embraces the Catholic faith she belonged to; the faith she so longed to have him accept. This is another crucial factor in his understanding of the forging of true and abiding friendships.

Augustine's relationship with his friends was always far more affectionately and universally received. Augustine pursued friends—which in his youth is exactly the opposite impulse he had towards his family. There are many friends whom he made and for various reasons. Some of them would be forged and forgotten.²⁹ Others made and constantly renewed, enduring until the end of his life. The most constant and enduring friendship Augustine had, was with his childhood friend—Alypius. There are various friends who are worthy of mention. Yet before we explore those, there are two lives that are intimately intertwined with Augustine's, that fall outside his parents and siblings. They also sit apart from those who had forged friendship with him. These two lives who sit apart from both initial family and friends are that of his common-law wife whose name we do not know and their son Adeodatus which means 'a gift of God'. He is mentioned several times by Augustine in deeply appreciative and affectionate terms: 'Also with us was Adeodatus, my son, the

²⁸ AU cf, 3.19-20.

²⁹ See, McNamara (1957), 184-210.

youngest of all, whose ability, if I am not blinded by love, promises something great'.³⁰ He was born in 372 in Carthage and was never far from his father's side. He travelled with Augustine along with his mother to Rome and later Milan and was baptised by Ambrose along with Augustine and Alypius at the Easter Vigil in 387. Prior to that he is with Augustine at the preparatory retreat at Cassiciacum and is the main interlocuter with Augustine in *de Magistro*, one of the five books written during that time. After this period, he returned to Africa with Augustine to help set up a community of friends (*servus dei*) in his father's house as a proto-monastic movement rooted back in Thagaste. Augustine's father died when he was just in the same house.³¹

The other life that is important is that of Adeodatus' mother, Augustine's common law wife.³² She is often referred to as his 'concubine', yet this with our modern sensibilities, we must set aside any notions of this being a pejorative term. Modern sensitivities do not convey the real sense of her true relational status to Augustine with any sense of justice. As Kim Power states:

Marriage (*coniugium, matrimonium*) was strictly regulated under Roman law, which was concerned with controlling citizenship rights. Marriage was forbidden between certain classes, and some groups of people were not permitted to marry at all. An alternative form of relationship was required, and concubinage (*concubinatus*) was regarded as a respectable solution. Concubinage was usually a monogamous, stable relationship, indistinguishable from marriage for many—for example, slaves who had no right to marry.³³

This is exactly what Augustine says about his unnamed woman: 'In those years I had a woman. She was not my partner in what is called lawful marriage...Nevertheless, she was

³⁰ AU vit, 6, (CWS, 1984), 171; 'erat etiam nobiscum aetate minimus omnium, sed cuius ingenium, si amore non fallor, magnum quiddam pollicetur, Adeodatus filius meus', (CCSL, 29: 68).

³¹ See, AU cf, 10.14; 10.29.

³² See, Powers (1992).

³³ Powers (1999), 222.

the only girl for me, and I was faithful to her'.³⁴ There are a variety of opinions over Augustine's investment in this relationship, yet what cannot be denied is the authentic character of Augustine's affection for her or of the validity of it. She was obviously of low birth and constrained by the legalities of Roman law. Augustine clearly loved her, in all but name it was nothing less than an authentic marriage. We must, however, be cautious concerning Augustine's polemics about being given over to sexual desires and his self-condemning rhetoric concerning his lustfulness. Augustine is joined to her at the age of seventeen, the following year after he returned to Carthage for further studies. He would remain with her for at least another twelve years. In an age of promiscuity and sexual misadventure where one's male prowess and potency was celebrated by one's peers, it is remarkable that he remained faithful to her for so long. Augustine in terms of his licentiousness is clearly in the minor leagues of his day.³⁵ Nevertheless, along with their son, she would be at Augustine's side until she was dismissed by Augustine at the behest of his Mother's desire to have him secure an aristocratic wife of Milanese stock. Monica, even when Augustine was thirty-two, was clearly still committed to her vision of her son fulfilling the path she set him on at an early age. She had thoughts of advancing her son's career by instigating this affair, yet it would come to nought as she was two years too young³⁶ to be legally married to Augustine at the time. He had, nevertheless become disenchanted by the whole affair. He would love no other woman, his 'common law wife' was the only true wife of his heart. He records the episode in vivid detail and emotional terms: 'the woman with whom I habitually slept was torn away from my side because she was a hindrance to my marriage. My heart which was deeply attached was cut and wounded, and left a trail of

³⁴ AU cf, 4.2, 53.

³⁵ See, Hunter (2012); (1999). Cavadini (2017), offers an insightful 'reconsideration' of Augustine developed vision of marriage as a necessary sacramental institution through which desire for pleasure becomes contained for a good.

³⁶ AU cf, 6.25.

blood’,³⁷ she was sent away vowing constant chastity, something Augustine would only achieve through self-imposed withdrawal from women in general. That would come later.

According to the norms of Friendship in the age of Augustine, friendships between men and women were generally not considered possible.³⁸ True friendship could only be achieved through the abolition of utility and given that in the ancient world men and women were not considered equal the inequality always introduced an element of utility into the equation. Friends had to be equal and co-dependant, any sense of superiority obliterated friendship as it undermined the mutuality of the union by virtue of the imbalance (see fn 18). Thus, with women in the ancient world, there was always an undercurrent of utility as men and women were not equal—therefore friendship would not be sought as it was considered impossible. We see this notion displayed by Augustine himself in *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim* in commenting upon the role of Eve. For Augustine, women were created for the single purpose of procreation: ‘If the question is asked, though for what purpose it was necessary for this help to be made, no more likely answer suggest itself than it was for the sake of procreating children’.³⁹ Thus, the cleaving together of men and women is for the sake of the world and for producing children for the earth. It is not, in his eyes, the summit of intimate union and companionship:

Or if it was not for help in production children that a wife was made for the man, then what other help was she for? If it was to till the earth together with him, there was as yet no hard toil to need such assistance; and if there had been need, a male would have made a better help. The same can be said about companionship, should he grow tired of solitude. How much more agreeably,

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Van Bavel (1987), suggests that Augustine does open up the extension of friendship between men and women in a broader sense as well as being restricted in a formal sense to men. This is a correct apprehension, nonetheless, the primary texts he cites, AU conj, 1.1; AU ep, 130.13, are within the context of an ecclesial apparatus of a Christian family. Thus, as we shall see, they are founded primarily upon a theological axiom.

³⁹ AU Gn li, 9.3,5 (WSA, I: 13), 378; ‘si autem quaeritur, ad quam rem fieri oportuit hoc adiutorium, nihil aliud probabiliter occurrit quam propter filios procreandos’. (CSEL, 28: 1.271).

after all, for conviviality and conversation would two male friends live together on equal terms than a man and wife? (*quanto enim congruentius ad conuiuendum et conloquendum duo amici pariter quam uir et mulier habitarent?*)⁴⁰

We must, however, be cautious. As Gerald Bonner in his article, *Augustine's attitude to women and amicitia* highlights that, this assertion by Augustine, falls into the category of the natural order not of the spiritual equality they shared in God's image and likeness: 'When discussing the creation of Eve and the destiny of women Augustine is talking about the natural order, not the spiritual'.⁴¹ It is also pertinent to affirm Bonner in that the historical context is key to understanding his views which fit within the context of his time: 'such an attitude is, of course, easily explicable by the ethos of late Roman society and of the classical civilization as a whole'.⁴² Nevertheless, though his 'common law' wife was clearly deeply held within his heart, she would not have been considered as occupying the summit of his love. That was reserved for his friends—a prerequisite being that they were men of relatively equal standing. However, in a spiritual sense, all this, like many other dynamics of Roman relationships, became radically transfigured by the time Augustine arrived at his final phase concerning friendship within Christ.

Augustine's Formation of Friendship

⁴⁰ Au Gn li, 9.5,9 (WSA, I: 13), 380; 'aut si ad hoc adiutorium gignendi filios non est facta mulier uiro, ad quod ergo adiutorium facta est? si, quae simul operaretur terram, nondum erat labor, ut adiumento indigeret, et, si opus esset, melius adiutorium masculus fieret. hoc et de solacio dici potest, si solitudinis fortasse taedebat. quanto enim congruentius ad conuiuendum et conloquendum duo amici pariter quam uir et mulier habitarent?'. (CSEL, 28: 1.273).

⁴¹ Bonner (1987), 263.

⁴² Ibid, 263.

We have touched briefly upon Augustine's family and formative development with friends under the *grammatici* and his initial contact with the classical curriculum. Here we trace his steps beyond adolescence. Friendship, as we have seen was born out of an adolescent desire for superiority and position. The stealing from his parents and his preoccupation with winning games displays for us a deep impulse for achievement in Augustine from his earliest age. In his youth his friends seemed to be engaged through childish games.⁴³ As he grew older, this playfulness would often see him in the company of menacing individuals and groups.⁴⁴ Yet, deep within this search formative period was a profound search to find one's true or fulfilled self. At the heart of Augustine's love of friends was a means of finding one's self in another, often described as a 'return' (as noted above). In this sense, friends and friendships become the sole focus of searching for the lost part of his own life in another. In many ways, friends were for Augustine the lost pieces of the puzzle of his own existence. It was in the intimate union of *anima* he would compel his search for wholeness and healing: "The greatest source of repair and restoration the solace of other friends, with whom I loved what I loved as a substitute for you".⁴⁵ Augustine from the very beginning invested most of his gaze upon the friends around him who could bring to him an inner sense of fulfilment in life. Much later on in life, writing to the widow Proba, Augustine would rhetorically beg the question concerning the instability of created things, even friendship: "Thus in no human affairs is anything dear to a human being without a friend. But where is such a friend found about whose heart and character one can in this life, have a certain confidence?".⁴⁶ Here belied another conundrum for Augustine.

⁴³ A good example of this is the famous 'Pear' incident which later made him reflect that: 'Friendship can be a dangerous enemy'. AU cf, 2.17.

⁴⁴ See, AU cf, 3.6, the 'wreckers'.

⁴⁵ AU cf, 4.13, 60; 'maxime quippe me reparabant atque recreabant aliorum amicorum solacia'. (CCSL, 27: 47)

⁴⁶ AU ep, 130.2.4 (WSA, II: 2), 186; 'ita in quibuslibet rebus humanis nihil est homini amicum sine homine amico. sed quousque talis inuenitur, de cuius animo et moribus sit in hac uita certa securitas?'. (CSEL, 44: 44).

What was the foundation of the friendship? What was it bound in and to? Before his conversion to Catholic Christianity, his heart was restless,⁴⁷ searching for the one who would provide that blissfulness to ballast the contingency of life. Yet before we proceed to the theological grounds of his notion of friendships, let us trace his steps through those friendships.

Joseph Lienhard, states: ‘friendship falls into two periods: from Cassiciacum to the *Confessions*, and from the *Confessions* to the end of his life’.⁴⁸ There have been many ways to compartmentalise the periods of Augustine’s life in terms of his vision of friendship and friends. Often those categorisations are highly conditioned by the prevailing lens by which scholars dissect Augustine’s own understanding. However, what we can say is that his understanding of friendship certainly evolves, particularly in light of those prevailing worldviews. What follows are four phases that can be definitively pinpointed as major milestones in his evolving vision of friends and friendship. 1). Augustine’s first phase was born out of a desire for dominance. In many ways this remained so, as he was always the epicentre of his circle of friends. Increasingly, friendship becomes qualified and associated with classical notions of the essence of friendship. 2). The second phase for Augustine, begins with his reading of Cicero’s *Hortensius* around the age of eighteen. It is his encounter with this now lost work of Cicero, the *Hortensius*, which was a book written concerning the ‘exhortation to philosophy’, that opened up his quest for truth in a new and dynamic way. This new perspective also gave him a much greater depth to his understanding of the nature of friends and friendship. The *Hortensius* in many ways, draws the strands of his literary endeavours into a fresh and promising ‘worldview’. It exposed him to a greater understanding of the essence of love itself, of life and thus the nature of friendships. Indeed, even a friend of wisdom—a philosopher.

⁴⁷ AU cf, 1.1.

⁴⁸ Lienhard, (1999), ‘Friendship, Friends’, in *ATA*, 372.

It also entices him to reflect upon the roots of his own trade (rhetoric) and to move toward focusing upon the pursuit of the divine rather than merely pursuing worldly ends, which was the primary focus of Orators. It helped shape the grammar as well as the ground of Augustine's ever deepening notion of friendship. It also provides him with the impulse through the pursuit of the divine that he would require to effectively denucleate the Scriptures within the context of ecclesial friendship (as we shall see in chapter 4). He describes his encounter with this book and how it had a profound impact upon his reflections of life and all its aspects:

Following the usual curriculum I had already come across a book by a certain Cicero, whose language (but not his heart) almost everyone admires. That book of his contains an exhortation to study philosophy and is entitled *Hortensius*. The book changed my feelings. It altered my prayers, Lord, to be towards you yourself. It gave me different values and priorities. Suddenly every vain hope became empty to me, and I longed for the immortality of wisdom with an incredible ardour in my heart. I began to rise up to return to you.⁴⁹

This marks the second phase of Augustine's inner conversion in which the focus of friendships becomes not about the pure self-reflection or juvenile self-centredness, but of that which lay beyond one's self in another. Thought the search for meaning becomes still located in the self—yet it also pointed beyond it. In essence, the writings of Cicero shape a metaphysical notion of the self and the other. Friendship thus became about a common love for wisdom and the foundation of a friendship founded in the friendship of wisdom (*philosophia*) was born. 3). The third phase comes with his rejection of his Catholic faith. In large part this happens as for him, his new love of philosophy has recast his view of the world and of Scripture. It highlighted the apparent incompatibility of sacred Scripture and Cicero—thus

⁴⁹ AU cf, 3.7, 38-39; 'et usitato iam discendi ordine perueneram in librum cuiusdam Ciceronis, cuius linguam fere omnes mirantur, pectus non ita. sed liber ille ipsius exhortationem continet ad philosophiam et uocatur Hortensius. ille uero liber mutauit affectum meum et ad te ipsum, domine, mutauit preces meas et uota ac desideria mea fecit alia. uiluit mihi repente omnis uana spes et immortalitatem sapientiae concupiscebam aestu cordis incredibili et surgere coeperam, ut ad te redirem'. (CCSL, 27: 29).

cementing his first love, that of classical literature and the search for divine wisdom with others. Nevertheless, his rejection of the Scriptures and contemplating the nature of existence led him into the arms of a new sect as he looked for where this wisdom would rest. This search finds its resting place at the heart of this third phase with his encounter with the writings of Mani and of his embrace of the Manichaeian religion. This happened at the age of seventeen (373) around the time of the death of his father and the birth of his son by the unnamed woman (see above).

We may be tempted to think of the Manichean religion as a purely esoteric gnostic sect founded upon the teachings of an obscure and illusive teacher named Mani. Yet this is not how they saw themselves. The initiated Augustine, a ‘hearer’ (layman) as opposed to the ‘elect’ (clergy), all saw themselves as Christians, indeed—true Christians. The rejection of the Scriptures marks for Augustine a rejection of Catholic Christianity and his embrace of Manichaeism. This clearly displayed an ongoing desire for authentic faith—indeed authentic Christianity based upon sound teaching that resonated with the current consensus of reason and experience. The Manichees rejected the Old Testament and utilised the New Testament with considerable selectiveness. On this point they relied heavily upon the ‘law of Mani’⁵⁰ for their engagement with Scripture due to the mainstream Christian corruption of the sources.⁵¹ This resonated with Augustine’s own assessment of Scripture. His love of philosophy had not displaced his desire for the divine—it had simply recast it. Manichaeism was an answer to a problem of why the Scriptures were inadequate as other pressing concerns such as his search for the answer to the problem of evil and suffering. He had fought hard to convert as many of his friends as possible to his new religion in his newfound university city of Carthage. He gathered around him, his un-named friend (see below), Alypius, who was perhaps his most

⁵⁰ AU Fel, ‘legis Manichaei’. (CSEL, 25: 2,827).

⁵¹ He writes: ‘They asserted that the scriptures of the New Testament had been tampered with by persons unknown’, AU cf, 5.21, 86.

faithful companion and friend, whom he refers to as, ‘*fratrem cordis mei*’ and Nebridius who becomes his friend in Carthage through Manichaeism. Augustine also put in much effort to secure the fidelity and friendship of Romanianus, his patron. Nevertheless, eventually he became increasingly disillusioned with Manichaeism, yet it was through his Manichean friends that he moved his life to Rome⁵² (383), and resided there with his Manichean friends.⁵³ Soon after moving to Rome he would move onwards to Milan (384), through ‘those intoxicated with Manichee follies’,⁵⁴ by then in search of a new worldview—a new wisdom, gathering his friends around him.

In Milan, Augustine arrived under the patronage of Symmachus the Governor of Rome, a Pagan and rival of Ambrose. This may be why Ambrose gives Augustine a cool reception as he pondered what Augustine’s motives may have been. Here we enter into the fourth and final phase of Augustine’s journey into the faith of fulfilling friendship. 4). There is no suggestion that Ambrose and Augustine ever became friends in the formal sense—but it is quite clear that in being baptised by Ambrose, the notions of friendship become forged in a radically new way. After the moment of grace in the garden with Alypius, Augustine begins gathering his friends around himself with the newfound faith in Catholic Christianity. Here we see Augustine opening up in new ways to those around him. Verecundus who had introduced him to neo-platonism became an important figure in his conversion and clearly is seen by Augustine as a newfound friend.

Neoplatonism certainly augmented his sense of a metaphysical focus to life. This greater clarifying notion of philosophy becomes quickly attached to his Christianity and his understanding of God. Verecundus, through his patronage of Augustine, enabled him to

⁵² AU cf, 5.14, 80.

⁵³ AU cf, 5.18, 84.

⁵⁴ AU cf, 5.23, 87, ‘*ipsos Manichaeis uanitatibus ebrios*’. (CCSL, 27: 70).

secure a new base from which he could issue the call for renewal—particularly his long-term friends. Verecundus in many ways become for him another Romanianus. At Verecundus’ villa in Cassiciacum (present day Cassago-Brinza) he gathers around himself Alypius, Adeodatus, Nebridius⁵⁵ (a member in absentia), Romanianus (whom the book *contra Academicos* is written in honour of),⁵⁶ his son Licentius, and Trygentius, as well as Navigius his brother along with Monica. In many ways this gathering of family and friends marks a new beginning in what would be the constitutive factor in forging friendships. Within his ‘imperialist’ mindset Augustine fought to consolidate his friends within the faith of his family. Here, Augustine begins to move from a theocentric vision of friendship towards a Christocentric vision. Before Monica’s death and his arrival back in Africa, he would find new friends such as Evodius, and with whom he would begin a new monastic movement.

As Augustine arrived back in Africa his life becomes increasingly ‘Christianised’ and liturgically and pastorally grounded. In the *Confessions* we see all the strands in place which provides us with a rich tapestry of his history of friends and friendships through the lens of his philosophical grammar and understanding. What remains stable, is that it was always understood as a binding of *anima* (as noted above). Not in what it was, but in what it was forged in and that, as we shall see—was always conditional upon agreement: ‘the heart of the friend is good with its sweet accord (*consensionis*) and loving trust’.⁵⁷ For example, reflecting upon his many years within Manichaeism he writes: ‘I did not neglect to tell my host that he should not put the excessive trust, which I perceived him to have, in the fabulous matters of which Manichee books are full. But I was in more intimate friendship with them than with

⁵⁵ AU cf, 9.6, 158.

⁵⁶ See, AU Ac, 2.1-3 (ACW, 12), 65-74.

⁵⁷ AU tri, 8.2.4 (WSA, I: 5), 244; ‘bonus animus amici consensionis dulcedine’, (CCSL, 50: 272). See also echoes of Cicero’s maxim on loving agreement, see n40.

others who were not in that heresy'.⁵⁸ This illustrates that for Augustine those with whom he was in inner communion with, the ones in which he shared a faith of conjugating souls, was where his love rested. Augustine would change his fidelities to different philosophical lenses as well as religious worldviews until that came to rest within Catholic Christianity. Belonging to his pattern of thought and praxis was vital for the bond of friendship to flourish. This pattern became fixed ever increasingly into the liturgical and spiritual life of the Church universal. Ecclesial union as a prerequisite to the fullness of Christian friendship became absolute. Having outlined the narrative of his formative years, we now turn to see the impact and expression it found in his writings. We trace the impact that literature and philosophical contribution to the grammar of his understanding of friendship and, most importantly how it shapes his notion of beings being bound together in a union of souls.

The Classical Character of Augustine's Vision of friendship

During Augustine's years imbibing the classical texts of the Latin west gave Augustine both a sharpened grammar and framework for his faith in friends. If not for Cicero, this may have been an ill-equipped beginning as Augustine was largely ignorant of Greek. Latin authors like Horace, Ovid, Livy, Virgil, Cicero and Apuleius (native of Madauros) all help shape this framework. Out of these Augustine would find the thought and the framework for articulating his notions of friendship. The greatest influence would be that of Cicero who, despite being completely unoriginal in his thoughts, managed to transmit the thoughts of more penetrating Greek philosophers to the young Augustine as well as the wider Latin world.

⁵⁸ AU cf, 5.19, 84-85; 'nec dissimulaui eundem hospitem meum reprimere a nimia fiducia, quam sensi eum habere de rebus fabulosis, quibus Manichaei libri pleni sunt. amicitia tamen eorum familiarius utebar quam ceterorum hominum, qui in illa haeresi non fuissent'. (CCSL, 27: 68).

Notions of friendship constituting an *alter ego* (another self) (AU cf, 4.(vi)15) stems from philosophical notions of mutual indwelling. We see this in Scripture⁵⁹ as well as the classical literature which informs it. Horace parses this as, ‘I pray you, and save one who is half my soul’.⁶⁰ Or of Ovid’s more Aristotelian notion of one soul living in two bodies: ‘the model of sincere love; these twain were a single heart in two bodies’.⁶¹ These notions find themselves entering the discourse as well as the notion of a symbiosis of souls bound together as one well before the age of Augustine. We also find these notions expressed in Cicero: ‘for he is, as it were, another self’.⁶² We do not have to look far to see how common these sentiments were within the contemporary discourse of the day. Ambrose himself will utilise such notions:

Let not the warning be harsh, nor the rebuke bitter, for as friendship ought to avoid flattery, so, too, ought it to be free from arrogance. For what is a friend but a partner in love, to whom thou unite and attaches the soul, and with whom it blends so as to desire from being two to become one; to whom you entrust yourself as to a second self⁶³

Augustine also refers to Orestes and Pylades as representing perfect friendship and fidelity, as conveyed by Cicero (*Amic.* 7.24).⁶⁴ As we shall see below, these notions become central to his understanding. Nevertheless, the Ciceronian maxim: ‘*Est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio*’⁶⁵ remained an

⁵⁹ *Ecclesiastic.* 6:11.

⁶⁰ Horace, *Odes*, 1.3.8, trans, N. Rudd, ‘reddas incolumem precor, et serves animae dimidium meae.’, LCL, 33. 28-29.

⁶¹ Ovid, *Tristia*, 4.4.72, trans, A. L. Wheeler, ‘qui duo corporibus mentibus unus erant’, LCL, 151. 180-181. Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, ‘he is related to his friend as to himself (for his friend is another self)’, (1166a30-1166b1), 1843.

⁶² Cicero, *Amic.* 21.80. It is also found in 7.23, ‘For he who looks at a friend, sees as it were a reflection of himself’.

⁶³ AM off, 3.22, 134, ‘Qui est enim amicus nisi consors amoris, ad quem animum tuum adiungas atque applices et ita misceas ut unum velis fieri ex duobus, cui te alteri tibi committas’. (Davidson, 2002).

⁶⁴ See, AU cf, 4, 11.

⁶⁵ Cicero, *Amic.* 20 (6), AU Ac, 3.13; AU ep, 258.1&4.

essential law and eventually becomes baptised within a Catholic ecclesiological framework. Yet the grammar and the essential notion of ‘agreement’ remained central to the maintenance and forging of the binding of *anima*.

Prior to Augustine writing his *Confessions*, he wrote to an old friend (AU ep, 258) outlining this new configured framework of Cicero’s maxim concerning friendship. The friend’s name was Martianus, someone who was clearly known to Augustine during his youth and someone clearly familiar with Cicero’s *de Amicitia* (*Amic*). From the underlying framework of Cicero’s definition of friendship being, ‘Friendship is an agreement on all things human and divine along with goodwill and charity’, he begins to lead his old friend into his newly reconfigured understanding of what this means. As he explains about where they began: ‘my friend of long standing, whom I did not have as long as I did not possess you in Christ’.⁶⁶ Augustine goes on to explain that the friendship they shared was based upon their agreement in things human but in things divine they, ‘limped on’. Augustine further clarifies his developed notion that true friendships are ‘weighted’ upon the latter—the more important component being the divine aspect to this maxim. In this we can glimpse Augustine placing greater emphasis on the agreement concerning the divine aspect of the formula and thus giving greater weight to the theocentric view of friendship over the anthropocentric.⁶⁷ Agreement on things merely human is no substantial basis for friendship, as agreement on things divine is the foundation of all true and substantial friendship. Augustine laments his own separation from the true *religio*: ‘you were not yet my friend, though you seemed to love

⁶⁶ AU ep, 258.1, (WSA, II: 4), 194; ‘ut tibi scriberem antiquissimo amico, quem tamen non habebam, quam diu in Christo non tenebam’. (CSEL, 57: 605).

⁶⁷ See, White (1992), 188.

me a great deal. For I was not then even a friend to myself.⁶⁸ He goes on to say that until his friend has accepted Christ like he had, friendship was impossible:

When, therefore, I hated my own soul, how could I have a true friend who wanted for me those things in which I endured myself as an enemy? But when the goodness and grace of our savior shed its light upon me, not in accordance with my merit, but in accord with his mercy, how could you be my friend when you had no part in this, since you were completely ignorant of the reason why I was able to be happy, and you did not love me in him in whom I myself had somehow become a friend to myself?⁶⁹

He takes the argument further by stating that the law of loving God and neighbour is the fulfilment of Cicero's maxim, that friendship requires loving one's friend *in* Christ: 'If you hold to these two most firmly along with me, our friendship will be true and everlasting, and it will unite us not only to each other but also to the Lord'.⁷⁰ However, Augustine caveats this with a prerequisite that he should enlist for baptism (into the Catholic faith) by which he can be saved and secured *in* Christ. As we see (below), this being *in* Christ becomes ever crystallised and fixed as an ecclesial indwelling, a binding of the many in the one Christ. From an anthropocentric focus through philosophy and religion he moves onto a theocentric position, and within Catholic Christianity it becomes thoroughly Christocentric and ecclesial.

As we have glimpsed and in which we shall further explore, as the Trinity becomes more of a focus for all theological reflection, so too does friendship become fixed with the notion of the many becoming one through the bonds of the Spirit. Yet the notion of a

⁶⁸ AU ep, 258.3, (WSA, II: 4), 195; 'quamuis me multum amare uidereris, nondum eras amicus meus, quando nec ipse mihi amicus eram sed potius inimicus. (CSEL, 57: 607).

⁶⁹ AU ep, 258.3. (WSA, II: 4), 195; 'cum ergo odissem animam meam, uerum amicum quo modo habere poteram ea mihi optantem, in quibus ipse me ipsum patiebar inimicum? Cum uero benignitas et gratia saluatoris nostri inluxit mihi non secundum merita mea sed secundum ipsius misericordiam [Tit 3,4sq.], tu ab hac alienus quo modo esse poteras amicus meus, qui, unde beatus esse possem, penitus ignorabas et non in hoc me amabas, in quo mihi ipse iam fueram utcumque amicus effectus?'. (CSEL, 57: 608).

⁷⁰ AU ep, 258.4. (WSA, II: 4), 195; 'haec duo si mecum firmissime teneas, amicitia nostra uera ac sempiterna erit et non solum inuicem nos sed etiam ipsi domino sociabit'. (CSEL, 57: 609).

universal unity of souls has a long pedigree pertaining from the pre-Socratic thought of Pythagoras and also present issues of exclusivity in persevering friendships. Notions of a ‘cosmic’ principal of friendship persisted long after Plato had shifted the principal to that of a metaphysical paradigm. Augustine states: ‘Human friendship is also a nest of love and gentleness because of the unity it brings about between many souls’.⁷¹ We see this also in his recollections of the unnamed friend whose death exposed Augustine’s frail foundations for friendship.⁷² Nevertheless, this notion becomes an important aspect in his fully developed notion of universal friendship in a Church that is found ‘everywhere’. This notion of the many being forged into one (as seen in n47) ends with the phrase ‘ex pluribus unum facere’, ‘out of many to forge unity’ is closely associated with Cicero’s ‘ut unus fiat ex pluribus’⁷³ and more explicitly in Cicero’s *De Officiis*:

Nothing, moreover, is more conducive to love and intimacy than compatibility of character in good men; for when two people have the same ideals and the same tastes, it is a natural consequence that each loves the other as himself; and the result is, as Pythagoras requires of ideal friendship, that several are united in one.⁷⁴

The major themes explored here shall be treated with far more focus in the subsequent chapter. Nevertheless, we should give some consideration to those friendships forged with the individuals he attracted along the way. Friends and friendships being so important to

⁷¹ AU cf, 2.10, 29-30; ‘amicitia quoque hominum caro nodo dulcis est propter unitatem de multis animis.’ (CCSL, 27: 22).

⁷² AU cf, 4.13, ‘These and other signs come from the heart of those who love and are loved and are expressed through the mouth, through the tongue, through the eyes, and a thousand gestures of delight, acting as fuel to set our minds on fire and out of many to forge unity’, 61; ‘his atque huius modi signis a corde amantium et redamantium procedentibus per os, per linguam, per oculos et mille motus gratissimos quasi fomitibus conflare animos et ex pluribus unum facere’. (CCSL, 27: 47).

⁷³ Cicero, *Amic.* 25.92, (LCL, 154), 198-199.

⁷⁴ Cicero, *De Of.* 1.56, ‘est amabilius nec copulatus quam morum similitudo bonorum; in quibus enim eadem studia sunt, eadem voluntates, in iis fit ut aequè quisque altero delectetur ac se ipso, efficiturque id, quod Pythagoras vult in amicitia, ut unus fiat ex pluribus.’ (LCL, 30), 58-59.

Augustine, he tells us much about those he desired to be with and cultivate. Augustine, as we have seen had always found time for friends and had cultivated the love of those whom he found himself amongst. Yet, his appetite for having friends never waned as he stepped into the adult world. Around this time of his youth we glimpse a picture of Augustine displaying how friendships could be negative. Without ethics aimed towards the *summum bonum* friendships became dangerous and even imperilled one's development—even one's salvation:

The single desire that dominated my search for delight was simply to love and to be loved. But no restraint was imposed by the exchange of mind with mind, which marks the brightly lit pathway of friendship. Clouds of muddy carnal concupiscence filled the air. The bubbling impulses of puberty befogged and obscured my heart so that it could not see the difference between love's serenity and lust's darkness.⁷⁵

We see this also in his account of what the enticement of a liberated youth within the city of Carthage. Augustine focuses upon the misadventure of being given over to lust as a perversion of love and a corruption of its aims. Love without the good was an inner pursuit of one's own internal imprisonment. Friendship without the proper aims, without its focus upon the good was nothing more than a foul phantom, an insubstantial imposter of loves true ends:

I came to Carthage and all around me hissed a cauldron of illicit loves. As yet I had never been in love and I longed to love; and from a subconscious poverty of mind I hated the thought of being less inwardly destitute. I sought an object for my love; I was in love with love, and I hated safety and a path free of snares (Wisd. 14:11; Ps. 90:3). My hunger was internal, deprived of inward food, that is of you yourself, my God. But that was not the kind of hunger I felt. I was without any desire for incorruptible nourishment, not because I was replete with it, but the emptier I was, the more unappetizing such food became. So my soul was in rotten health. In an ulcerous condition it thrust itself to outward things, miserably avid to be scratched by contact with the world of the senses. Yet physical things had no soul. Love lay outside their range. To me it was sweet to love and to be loved, the more so if I could also enjoy the body of the beloved. I therefore

⁷⁵ AU cf. 2.2, 24; 'et quid erat, quod me delectabat, nisi amare et amari? sed non tenebatur modus ab animo usque ad animum, quatenus est luminosus limes amicitiae, sed exhalabantur nebulae de limosa concupiscentia carnis et scatebra pubertatis et obnubilabant atque obfuscabant cor meum, ut non discerneretur serenitas dilectionis a caligine libidinis. (CCSL, 27: 18).

polluted the spring water of friendship with the filth of concupiscence. I muddied its clear stream by the hell of lust⁷⁶

Augustine would look back upon these episodes of his life with a sense of shame that cemented his vision of who or what he was united with—*concupiscentia* or *caritas*. Of course, as it has been recognised, Augustine often uses friendship in the pejorative sense,⁷⁷ yet, it nevertheless displays what for Augustine lies at the heart of what friendship is—a *binding*. In many ways, Cicero's maxim finds its essential *telos* in Christ, friendship was a binding, a joining together of souls, forged in either *concupiscentia* or *caritas*. Friendship was what love achieved, but what it was forged in, this determined the direction of its aims. Friendships forged in *concupiscentia* was directed towards the desires of the self—and of the lesser things of life which Augustine knew well. *Caritas* on the other hand, was the foundation of friendships that were directed towards the good. In this sense, '*cum benevolentia et caritate consensio*' directs Augustine to see Christ as the completion of Cicero—indeed all philosophy. *Caritas*, whom Augustine links to the Holy Spirit, comes to see this through the lens of Church and Trinity. Nevertheless, this notion of friendship as a *binding*—*religare*, influenced his life as well as those who influenced him, the notion of mutual indwelling of reciprocal souls. For Augustine, the bond of being friends could therefore tie one to that which was destructive, it would not be until Augustine would become a Manichean that it came to be impressed upon him that who one cleaved to has an intimate effect upon one's own moral character.

⁷⁶ AU cf, 3.1, 35; 'ueni Carthaginem, et circumstrepebat me undique sartago flagitiosorum amorum. nondum amabam et amare amabam et secretiore indigentia oderam me minus indigentem. Quaerebam quid amarem, amans amare, et oderam securitatem et uiam sine muscipulis, quoniam fames mihi erat intus ab interiore cibo, te ipso, deus meus, et ea fame non esuriebam, sed eram sine desiderio alimentorum incorruptibilium, non quia plenus eis eram, sed quo inanior, fastidiosior. et ideo non bene ualebat anima mea et ulcerosa proiciebat se foras, miserabiliter scalpi auida contact sensibilium. sed si non haberent animam, non utique amarentur. amare et amari dulce mihi erat magis, si et amantis corpore fruerer. uenam igitur amicitiae coinquinabam sordibus concupiscentiae candoremque eius obnubilabam de tartaro libidinis'. (CCSL, 27: 27).

⁷⁷ See, Monagle, (1994), 83.

When it came to different phases of Augustine's development and journey through the various philosophical and religious loci of his internal focus, he would never leave his friends lives aside from his own. As Peter Brown notes: 'Augustine was an imperialist in his friendships. To be a friend of Augustine's meant only too often becoming a part of Augustine himself'.⁷⁸ This is not an insignificant factor in his struggle with the Donatists as it shapes the character of Augustine's aims as a theologian which sit alongside the State. As we have seen from the account of the un-named friend, Augustine was highly intolerant of his friends deviating from the path he had set out for them. The mocking of the unnamed friend's baptism is a good example of this.

The *Confessions* remains the most enticing place for us to delve into the story of Augustine's life with all its raw and unblinkered honesty. Yet, like everything else, it only provided a vision of friendship that is yet to deepen and develop further. It was published in the year of Ambrose' death (397), and with the death of Valerius Bishop of Hippo (396) still fresh in his mind from the previous year, it marks a moment of an internal dialogue which is profoundly reflective. In the wake of the loss of two important ecclesial mentors and friends, Augustine writes the *Confessions* having just entered a new and final stage of his career. Augustine would be the 'new' Valerius to Hippo, and to the broader continent, the Ambrose of Africa.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, of all the insight he presents to us in the *Confessions* on his formation in friendship and love of friends, one incident stands out as the most illustrative and illuminating as to how his vision of friendship would deepen and develop around the notion of ecclesial unity and as the Church as the body of the befriended.

The death of the un-named friend is recounted in book four of the *Confessions*. It is the second time Augustine leaves the individual anonymous (his common-law wife being the

⁷⁸ Brown (2000), 52.

⁷⁹ Hermanowicz (2008), 29-30.

first) and one can only speculate as to why that is. For Augustine, in a sense, the un-named friend is both an opportunity and a catastrophe. It is a moment missed in which he and his friend could have both entered into the body of Christ—it turned out to be a moment in which the friend had chosen Christ over Augustine before dying. In this sense it is a moment missed, for both could have found their rest together in Christ. Augustine, distraught by the friend's new inner-union to Christ through the sacrament of baptism, found himself set aside and the ground of his own being was exposed for what it was—mortal. It is worth at this point to cite an abridged version of this episode as it is instrumental in illustrating his central notion of friendship as a binding of *anima*—a conjugation of souls expressed in classical terms. It also captures much of his formative notions of friendship.

He was then not yet my friend, and when he did become so, it was less than a true friendship which is not possible unless you bond together those who cleave to one another by the love which 'is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us' (Rom. 5: 5) Nevertheless, it was a very sweet experience, welded by the fervour of our identical interests. For I had turned him away from the true faith ... When he was sick with fever, for a long time he lay unconscious in a mortal sweat, and when his life was despaired of, he was baptized without his knowing it. To me this was a matter of no interest. I assumed that his soul would retain what it had received from me, not what had happened to his body while he was unconscious. But it turned out quite differently. For he recovered and was restored to health, and at once, as soon as I could speak with him (and I was able to do so as soon as he could speak, since I never left his side, and we were deeply dependent on one another), I attempted to joke with him, imagining that he too would laugh with me about the baptism which he had received when far away in mind and sense. But he had already learnt that he had received the sacrament. He was horrified at me as if I were an enemy, and with amazing and immediate frankness advised me that, if I wished to be his friend, I must stop saying this kind of thing to him (8) ... After a few days, while I was absent, the fever returned, and he died. ... I had become to myself a vast problem, and I questioned my soul 'Why are you sad, and why are you very distressed?' But my soul did not know what reply to give (8-9) ... I was in misery, and misery is the state of every soul overcome by friendship with mortal things and lacerated when they are lost. ... I thought that since death had consumed him, it was suddenly going to engulf all humanity. That was, to the best of my memory, my state of mind (vi.11) ... I was surprised that any other mortals were alive, since he whom I had loved as if he would never die was dead. I was even more surprised that when he was dead I was still alive, for he was my 'other self'. Someone has well said of his friend, 'He was half my soul'. had felt that my soul and his soul were 'one soul in two bodies'. So my life was to me a horror. I did not wish to live with only half of myself, and perhaps the reason why I so feared death was that then the whole of my much-loved friend would have died (vi.11)...I carried my lacerated and bloody soul

when it was unwilling to be carried by me. I found no place where I could put it down.⁸⁰

The overriding theme here is that it gives us the sense that friends and friendships were not just a part of Augustine's life—they were vessels in which he invested his own life, two people sharing one unified life together. Friends were always an extension of himself. So, wedded to the love of friends, Augustine invested all he had into them. He would never leave them aside from his self, they would always be required by his side. We find here also the classical grammar that enabled him to describe what it was that he sought in friends, they were 'alter ego', 'other selves' or even 'half' of oneself.⁸¹ In a very radical way, the classical description enables him to describe what they were to him. In this sense Augustine is wedded to the classical notions of friendship and how in Christ they are transfigured along with himself. Yet, the nucleus of this incident is about the distinction between created and un-

⁸⁰ AU cf, 4.7-12, 56-59; 'sed nondum erat sic amicus, quamquam ne tunc quidem sic, uti est uera amicitia, quia non est uera, nisi cum eam tu agglutinas inter haerentes tibi caritate diffusa in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis [Rm 5,5]. sed tamen dulcis erat nimis, cocta feruore parilium studiorum. nam et a fide uera...cum enim laboraret ille febribus, iacuit diu sine sensu in sudore laetali et, cum desperaretur, baptizatus est nesciens me non curante et praesumente id retinere potius animam eius quod a me acceperat, non quod in nescientis corpore fiebat. longe autem aliter erat. nam recreatus est et saluus factus, statimque, ut primo cum eo loqui potui - potui autem mox, ut ille potuit, quando non discedebam et nimis pendebamus ex inuicem - temptaui apud illum inridere, tamquam et illo inrisuro mecum baptismum, quem acceperat mente atque sensu absentissimus. sed tamen iam se accepisse didicerat. at ille ita me exhorruit ut inimicum admonuitque mirabili et repentina libertate, ut, si amicus esse uellem, talia sibi dicere desinerem... post paucos dies me absente repetitur febribus et defungitur...factus eram ipse mihi magna quaestio et interrogabam animam meam, quare tristis esset et quare conturbaret me ualde, et nihil nouerat respondere mihi.... miser eram, et miser est omnis animus uinctus amicitia rerum mortalium et dilaniatur, cum eas amittit, et tunc sentit miseriam, qua miser est et antequam amittat eas ... mirabar enim ceteros mortales uiuere, quia ille, quem quasi non moriturum dilexeram, mortuus erat, et me magis, quia ille alter eram, uiuere illo mortuo mirabar. bene quidam dixit de amico suo dimidium animae suae [Hor. carm. 1,3,8]. nam ego sensi animam meam et animam illius unam fuisse animam in duobus corporibus, et ideo mihi horrore erat uita, quia nolebam dimidius uiuere, et ideo forte mori metuebam, ne totus ille moreretur, quem multum amaueram ... portabam enim concisam et cruentam animam meam impatientem portari a me, et ubi eam ponerem non inueniebam.' (CCSL, 27: 43-48).

⁸¹ See, Stang (2016).

created things, between the mortal contingent order and the immortal and immaterial God. The notion of the transitory nature of things—including friendship is alarmingly apparent to Augustine. The idea of the friend dying encapsulates the existential crisis of annihilation. That friendship resting upon human beings were subject to the same fate of all thing—they pass away and were ultimately forged in the love of self, concupiscence. What Augustine is confronted with in the death of his friend is the truth of transitory relationships. It exposes for him the finality of *things*, including human love. The final few sentences capture for us this debilitating truth. Nevertheless, from this example we can also glean that the notion of religious and philosophical truth seeking was an intrinsic part of the ‘agreement’. Indeed, Augustine begins this story by stating that he had converted him from the ‘true faith’ (Catholic) and that their interests were ‘identical’.

The Ciceronian maxim remained a standard, for the friend to be a friend of Augustine—it requires an alignment of *anima*. For agreement in all things human and divine could not be set aside from the intimate intertwining of the soul. Augustine would never leave his friends outside a system of truth he had adopted as this would render an imbalance in their internal alignment. He would throughout his life go out of his way to secure their involvement in his faiths and investment in his thoughts (this is well illustrated by the death of the un-named friends). What is also asserted by Augustine, is that true friendships are constituted by the Trinity, of whom Christ’s incarnation was central. Yet, before Augustine would become a Catholic Christian, he would likewise endeavour to peruse his friendship within his own worldview. For example, Romanianus, another convert to Manichaeism via Augustine would be encouraged to join the Catholic Church once Augustine had himself decided to join.

The acute internal isolation coupled with his deep anxiety about life, love and mortality, compelled Augustine to seek what may be called, ‘stabilising factors’. These were

what Augustine required, foundations and ballasts to counter the inner disorientation and fear of life as well as death.⁸² Friendships for Augustine invariably remained more than a mere accessory to life. They were, in a real sense, participants in one's essential being, a network of co-operative *anima*.⁸³ It was with and through his friends, within the epistemic system he was wedded to at the time, that Augustine sought to heal the inner-displacement. Companions that enabled him to find the healing truth by which the orientation of the self was able to, 'return to myself'. The network of friends was an essential use to his existential instability. However, as we see in the death of the un-named friend, it would ultimately be what constituted that friendship. It would only be through the incarnate Christ that one could participate within the matrix of the life of the Trinity—the life of eternal intimate exchange, caught up within the very bosom of God through the Holy Spirit which binds God in God and God in humanity. No true friendship for Augustine could exist outside of the Spirit which binds many throughout the world into one fellowship, a *societatis unitate*.

The Foundation of True Friendship

The quest of Augustine, like many in the ancient world as well as today,⁸⁴ was to escape the isolation of human existence and to ascend to that which is more stable and thus more desirable. Every system of salvation, prior to his conversion to Christianity, aimed to either provide a worldview through which Augustine could rationalise the world and/or provide a praxis by which he could live out a meaningful existence beyond an unstable transient

⁸² AU cf, 4.11, 'taedium uiuendi erat in me grauissimum et moriendi metus.' (CCSL, 27: 45).

⁸³ By the time of Augustine, theories of friendships had already enjoyed a rich and varied philosophical development. For an overview of friendship antedating Christianity see, Fitzgerald, (1997). For an overview within fourth century Christianity see, White (1992).

⁸⁴ For a study of friendship as an antidote to isolating habits see, Kimbriel (2014).

existence. Nothing was more important than the epistemological praxis of the participating *anima* of his friends, bound together, seeking the friendship of divine wisdom itself. Whatever worldviews he pursued, he encouraged his friends to do likewise, for they were always his inner escorts in the pursuit of the restorative truth which lay at the heart of his quest for a solid foundation of what it was to live a meaningful existence. Augustine always saw it as his duty to induct and initiate his friends into his worldview. We see this in his elucidations on Varro's views on the *summum bonum* in *de civitate dei*. Augustine's axiomatic embrace of friends participating in one's own epistemic system (as was common currency amongst educated men in antiquity) pours through:

When, therefore, it is asked whether the wise man ought to embrace the social life, so that he wants and cares about the supreme good, which makes a person happy, as much for his friend as for himself, or whether he does what he does solely for the sake of his own happiness alone, this is not a question about the ultimate good itself. Rather, it is only a question about including or not including a companion to participate in that good with oneself, and doing so not for one's own sake but for the sake of the companion, so that one rejoices as much in one's own companion's good as one does in one's own⁸⁵

Within the matrix of being, the *animus*⁸⁶ was the keystone of communion, by which his friends participated within the life of each other. Friendship was an enterprise of epistemological praxis within a network of participating *anima*: 'For what does the *animus* love in a friend but *animum*?'.⁸⁷ The love of friends demonstrated the external union to the internal binding of *animus* in their reciprocal and unitive endeavours.

⁸⁵ AU ci, 19.1, (WSA, I: 7), 350; 'cum ergo quaeritur de sociali uita, utrum sit tenenda sapienti, ut summum bonum, quo fit homo beatus, ita uelit et curet amici sui, quem ad modum suum, an suae tantummodo beatitudinis causa faciat quidquid facit: non de ipso summo bono quaestio est, sed de adsumendo uel non adsumendo socio ad huius participationem boni, non propter se ipsum, sed propter eundem socium, ut eius bono ita gaudeat, sicut gaudet suo' (CCSL, 48: 659).

⁸⁶ See, Teske (1999), 807-12.

⁸⁷ AU tri, 8.10.14, 'quid amat animus in amico nisi animum?'. (CCSL, 50: 25-380).

The death of his un-named friend resided so strongly in the memory of Augustine precisely because it is the event in which the foundations and ballasts of stability collapse within himself and expose the ontological contingency of created beings. It was also the event in which the salvation system which united them was rent in two as the friend had opted for something other, and ‘more real’ than Augustine could offer at that time. There is more than a sense of irony about the missed opportunity to have been baptised along with his friend. Like the story of Monica’s dream in which Augustine, not Monica, moves towards her,⁸⁸ the friend who died highlights for Augustine that the friend had moved in a direction that could have delivered both, if only he had accepted baptism and belonging. The mocking of his friend before his death signals his rebellion against God who alone would ground Augustine in truth and return him to his true self in Christ, the one in whom he would finally rest.⁸⁹ For without Christ his displacement would remain and the contingency of being exercised in various systems through his mortal friends would continue to highlight his lack of stability and his unity with transitory things for: ‘misery is the state of every soul overcome by friendship with mortal things and lacerated when they are lost’.⁹⁰

In the garden of Milan, Augustine, in tears with the reality of life, heard the call, ‘*tolle lege*’. There is a sense of irony that in the moment of his conversion it is through the Scriptures he had long since rejected. For Augustine this marks a moment in which he becomes immersed in a personal encounter with the living God which provides the motion for a radical inversion of his view of the divine in relation to humanity. The aim was to seek wisdom through the cultivation of the *animus* directing one’s gaze with ever greater clarity and focus

⁸⁸ AU cf, 3.19-20.

⁸⁹ AU cf, 1.1.

⁹⁰ AU cf, 4.11, 58; ‘miser est omnis animus uinctus amicitia rerum mortalium et dilaniatur, cum eas amittit’. (CCSL, 27: 45). This also resonates with Augustine’s angst summed up in AU do, 1.20-21 that only those who reference themselves and all thing in God will profit from them.

towards the divine from whom all things emanated. In a moment of galvanizing grace however, Augustine discovers the God who reached out in love towards him in an act of divine descent (something Augustine believed happened at every sacramental act).⁹¹ In Christ, Augustine finds the God of grace whose nature is befriending *caritas*. Thus, Christ is the fulfilment of all his formation in friendship. It galvanized in him Cicero's maxim on agreement and the classical grammar of sharing with others one's inner life within the framework of the Trinity. This marks the precipice on which all of Augustine's thinking on love falls in on itself, the incarnation becoming the major event of the inversion of ascendant truth (AU ep, 258).

This incarnational character may seem at odds with the notion of equality and that inequality introduces utility into the relationship and thus extinguishes it. However, on this point of contention, one could be friends with a low class if one's befriending descended to the same level but could not go the other way around. This would introduce utility as an aspect of societal ascent. Decent on the other hand would not introduce utility. As Bavel states:

Because friendship is incompatible with seeking one's own profit, both Cicero and Augustine cautioned against friendship with the powerful of this world...It is, on the contrary, in the nature of friendship that he who is superior makes himself equal to the inferior, and bends himself down to the weaker⁹²

We see this in the relationship he has with Romanianus. Nevertheless, in a theological sense, this fits with a kenotic notion of descent (Phil 2:6-8) in that it dovetails with the classical norms of friendship. This captures the centrality of the incarnation as an act of divine befriending as a mark of the loving benevolence of the

⁹¹ Ployd, (2015), 147-162. It is worth noting that throughout Ployd's writings on the 'Pro-Nicene' exegesis of Augustine's *Tractatus* presents the church as the place where the Trinity is the foundation of its life and work but does not make the link to friendship.

⁹² Van Bavel (1987), 63.

gift of knowing God in intimate union. Augustine thus understands friendship with God is a gratuitous grace that humanity receives. It is the act of the Son's descent that forges a divine gateway—a vessel in which humanity may be saved through the Spirit.

Since the Trinity would be the foundation of his life, he would now find himself once again seeking his friends to participate with him in the life of the triune God: 'For he who truly loves a friend, loves God in the friend'.⁹³ They however would now be held not within himself—a created thing; friends along with himself became deposited within the body of Christ through the church—which constitutes the *corpus* of the *totus Christus*. In Christ Augustine finds the foundation and inner stabilising reality through which he and his friends could participate, in the life of the church, becoming '*amicitiam Christi*'⁹⁴ through the Spirit which binds all in all.

Summary

We have seen the way in which from an early age Augustine related to his family and how his formative years were spent in bartering and vying for the attention of friends. It is in the very early years that Augustine begins to understand the nature of friendship and that had always included being part of a group. In his reflections on these friendships in his formative years, Augustine understands that friends could be beneficial—yet possibly detrimental to one's moral compass and internal condition. Through his philosophical and religious experimentation, Augustine develops an ever-increasingly sophisticated understanding of what makes friends—or rather *in* what friends are made. Cicero's maxim, from this point, remained a staple of his mental and emotional furniture: '*Est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium*

⁹³ AU s, 336:2, 'ille enim ueraciter amat amicum, qui deum amat in amico', (PL, 1472: 48).

⁹⁴ AU Ps, 131.6, (CCSL, 40: 1425-2196).

divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio'. The alignment of the individual *anima* was essentially the conjugation of the reciprocal exchange of the human essence which forged the foundations of friendship. What was not clear to him initially was the character of the union, what was its character, *concupiscentia* or *caritas*? The death of the unnamed friend crystallised both the emotional content and the substantial content of Augustine's abiding notion of not just what friendship was but what both forges and establishes it. The friend who was inducted into Manichaeism by Augustine, cements Cicero's notion of 'agreement' into a context of *religio*—to bind back. As we see that is fractured in the baptism of his dying friend. In becoming a friend of Christ, the friend had abandoned Augustine, as Manichaeism retained in Augustine a self-centredness. The misery he faced was, at the time of its writing (circa 397) an illustration to the self-indulgent nature of Augustine's internal unions. Eventually in becoming a Catholic, like his friend, through baptism, Augustine understood himself in the light of the dead friend who lives for Christ. Having been delivered through death, through the sacrament of baptism, Augustine becomes a signum of Christ rather than himself and the humbling of himself within the Church becomes the mission of his life. Friends were now not signs (*signa*) of themselves but of Christ. Those who were to be friends of Augustine, were forced to make a choice—be Catholic or be gone. When it came to his engagement with the Donatist, friendship is rallied to the fore as a means of underlining the unity that one is forced to choose between, that of God and his Church or the world.

Chapter 3

“*Quia Caritas Dei*” Donatism, Friendship the Unity of Christ

et pro eis, inquit, ego, id est, quod prosit etiam ipsis, quia et ipsi sunt ego, sicut mihi profuit in me, quia homo sum sine ipsis: et ego sanctifico meipsum, hoc est, ita in me tamquam meipsum sanctifico ego, quoniam in me etiam ipsi sunt ego.

*In Iohannis euangelium tractatus, 108.5*¹

beatus qui amat te et amicum in te et inimicum propter te.

*Confessionum 4.14*²

Introduction

In this chapter ‘*Quia Caritas Dei*’³ we come to the point at which Augustine is now seeking to congeal estranged Christians into one *societatis unitate*, a ‘holy fellowship’. The Imperial legislation of the Edict of Unity (405), by this time had been implemented the previous year and Augustine, as well as the his colleagues, both sought to capitalise and consolidate its effects into a cohesive community *Catholica*, woven together within the love of God. Here we explore how Augustine takes forward the challenge of the assimilation of both parties, Donatists and Catholics bound together as one body—one *ecclesia*. Fundamental to his re-unification process was his trinitarian ‘Pro-Nicene’ theology of the Church and how as Christ’s body it became the vessel of divine

¹ AU Jo, 108.5; ‘But on behalf of His members He says, "And for their sakes I,"-that is, that the benefit may be also theirs, for they too are [included in the] I, just as it benefited me in myself, because I am man apart from them-" I sanctify myself," that is, I sanctify them as if it were my own self in me, since in me they also are I’. (NFNP, 1: 7).

² AU cf, 4.14; ‘Happy is the person who loves you’ (Tobit 13:18) and his friend in you, and his enemy because of you (Matt. 5:44).’.

³ A phrase which Augustine important into the tractatus from Romans 5:5, ‘*spes autem non confundit: quia caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum, qui datus est nobis*’. This passage within Tractate 9.8 is key to cementing the unity of Scripture and of his notion of the Church as forged within the life of the Trinity who is caritas.

friendship. This sits within a broader matrix of his theology of love, specifically the command to love God and neighbour ‘as yourself’ (Mt 22:36-40).⁴ Love constituted the foundation of what it meant to be a Christian, a ‘*concordissimum uinculum*’.⁵ We see how Augustine’s broader vision of love dovetails with his notion of friendship within a trinitarian matrix of participation. Central to his theology of love was how it attracted and bound even dissimilar things to other things. The power of God’s love to overcome difference and distinction, for ‘*cupiditas enim cupit diuidere, sicut caritas colligere*’⁶.

The context of this overcoming of dissimilar things is key to Augustine’s Christocentric ecclesiology which had an intense emphasis upon the incarnation as the theological epicentre of God’s salvific act of unitive love in assuming a human nature, binding humanity and God together. The nature of the incarnation underpins and cements the unitive primordial act of bridging the demarcation of ontologically distinct realities, even that of Creator and Creation.⁷ Everything therefore is bridged within the binding force of unitive love arrested as friendship within the economy of charitable salvation. Nevertheless, Augustine is clear that beyond the body of the Church, the *Ecclesia Catholica*, Charity (the Holy Spirit), which is the essential soul of the Church—the *animus* of God, does not exist. As we have seen, Augustine invested his initial friendships in ‘mortal things’. In his formation he thus sought the stability of the divine as a firm foundation of friendship. In becoming a Christian, Augustine therefore transfers the notion of reciprocal investment from others into the body of the Catholic Church. It now becomes the spiritual bank in which he will deposit his *animus* and through it be joined to the *anima* of other in Christ. In this sense, the conjugation of souls becomes founded upon the Holy Spirit which presents itself within

⁴ See, van Bavel (1999); Early (2018).

⁵ AU s, 312.6. (PL, 38: 1422).

⁶ AU s, 265.11. (PL, 38: 1224).

⁷ AU s, 265.9. (PL, 38: 1224).

his trinitarian matrix of the Church. This matrix of conjugating *anima* within the Spirit of God reflects the primordial conjugation of natures forged within the hypostatic union of the incarnation. The Spirit within this matrix therefore becomes the primordial *animus* of God, through which the Church holds together the many as one within one womb. Outside the Body of the Church, the Spirit is not present and therefore friendship through the conjugation of souls within the Spirit of God is impossible. However, even within the body, friendship remains dependent upon ‘agreement’. We see this when he states: ‘So, there is one body and no divisions are made except for disagreement. Charity, however, makes a binding and the binding comprises of unity, for unity maintains Charity, for charity brings us to glory. I say that for certain members’.⁸ This foundational premise underpins his pastoral polemic of how both parties now share in a common future by participating within the same Body through the Spirit in the *Ecclesia Catholica*. Being bound together within the *caritas Dei* is thus the basis of becoming forged as friends of God and neighbour within one unified community. Augustine sees the Church as a kind of ‘womb of wisdom’, through which God brings to birth his true friends—saints.⁹

In the first Chapter we explored the rancorous and intractable relationship between both the two parties, the Donatists on the one side, the Roman State and Catholic cause on the other. We have seen how the catastrophic history they shared cemented a deep and abiding suspicion and an intractable hatred between both parties. It was certainly true that love between Catholics and Donatists was profoundly lost. The command to love was far from a lived reality. The context of Augustine’s own day is coloured and curtailed by this bitter and acrimonious history which was

⁸ AU Ps, 30.1, (trans, mine), ‘sic est enim unum corpus, ut non sit discissio; non autem facit discissionem nisi dissensio. caritas autem compagem facit, compages complectitur unitatem, unitas seruat caritatem, caritas peruenit ad claritatem. dicat ergo ex quibusdam membris.’ (CCSL, 38: 203).

⁹ For example, Augustine states in AU Jo, 11.7, ‘Those who are born of the Catholic Church are born as it were of Sarah, are born of the free woman; while those who are born of heresy are born as it were of the slave-girl’. 217.

often embedded in violent and vicious conflict. We have also seen in Chapter two, what shaped and developed Augustine's understanding of friendship. The description of his friends through his writings provides us with a penetrating vision and vivid picture of both his development and the central position friendship took within his life. Augustine's notion of friendship, as we have seen, was essentially a *binding*—a network of friends through which each other possessed themselves within the other. By the time he begins dealing with Donatism, his highly developed notion of friendship becomes the locus of his law of love.

Friendship occupied a summit of what the conjugation of beings in love promised. Fundamentally, there was no greater act than of the incarnation. Within the *Tractatus*, with its implicit emphasis upon the incarnation and love, particularly friendship, Augustine displays for us a unique prism through which he displays his fully developed understanding of friendship as ecclesial dwelling. That friendship is essentially a *binding* of *anima* of which the Holy Spirit becomes the means by which the many are made into one body—the *totus Christus*. By the time Augustine is faced with the new challenge of re-forging a new community made up of both Catholics and Donatists, the incarnational Christocentric nature of ecclesial love becomes the bedrock of his polemic. This forges the theological *telos* of his vision of friendship being the summit of what love achieves. The ontological nature of divine love (the Spirit) is quite simply the essence of Augustine's notion of *religio*, the foundation of perfect unity. Expressed as friendship, it occupied the crowning glory of what true love *achieved*. For example, he would often evoke the Scripture and say of his Lord: 'God of my heart' (AU cf, 4. 3). The heart was the litmus of his soul and tastes the goodness of the love of the living God of love: 'it was as if a light of relief from all anxiety flooded into my heart' (AU cf, 8.29). Nevertheless, in dealing with this pastoral crisis of re-unification of the Church, Augustine finds himself capitalising on the Imperial pressure by attempting to heal the divisions of the past with a focus upon a common unified future forged within the vision of divine befriending. The notion of friendship offers a splendid vision of that to which all Christians are called. Christ being both the means and the goal, the 'way and the life' (Jn. 14:6). If Augustine

were to move both parties forward, love must prevail over the hatred of the past. As he preached within his Basilica, standing, and listening side by side with one another were both Catholics and Donatists.¹⁰ Love was the answer—friendship the prize.

In Societatis Unitate

The Imperial pressure levelled against the Donatists had a significant effect upon them. The Edict of Unity (405) was the most decisive legal and social intervention by the State since Constantine's attempt to resolve the issue. Donatism was effectively outlawed, Clergy were exiled, property seized, and huge penalties levied upon those who resisted. Augustine even took personal possession of the Donatist Basilica just around the corner from his own.¹¹ The Schism was in contravention of heresy laws and therefore was officially declared illegal. In 407 Augustine wrote to the Rogatist¹² Bishop Vincent in support of the secular pressure: 'I think that it is not useless that they be held in check and corrected by the authorities established by God'.¹³ As we have seen, Augustine supported the intervention of the State and indeed the Edict of Unity was issued in response to Donatist inflexibility and the violence of the circumcellion. However, Augustine disapproved of violence. It was fear that Augustine required for the cultivation of faith—faith

¹⁰ There is a lack of agreement on this issue. However, given Augustine's own account such as AU ep, 93 (see below) van der Meer's assertion (1961), that 'there was always a mixed congregation in the great church' seems plausible. (103–104). For a more cautious approach see, M.-F. Berrouard (1969), 36–53.

¹¹ See, O'Donnell, J. J. (2012), 505–515.

¹² The Rogatist sect were a schismatic sect of the Donatists who broke away around 370 during the tenure of Parmenian. Their name, like Donatism itself, derives from the bishop of Cartenna name, Rogatus who led the split. Augustine wrote to his successor, Vincentius (AU ep, 93) during the time of assimilating schismatics back into Catholic unity. See Fitzgerald (1999), 'Rogatism' in *ATA*, 726–727; Van der Meer (1961), 86; Shaw (2011), 55–58.

¹³ AU ep, 93.1 (WSA, II: 1), 377; 'sed Donatistae nimium inquieti sunt, quos per ordinatas a deo potestates'. (CSEL, 34: 2,445).

within Catholic unity. In the aftermath of the Edict, Augustine was now faced with translating this ‘fear’ towards friendship in Christ and forging a new future for both groups not in force but in love. He tells us:

Oh, if I could show you how many sincere Catholics we now have from the Circumcellions! They condemn their former life and wretched error, because of which they thought that they did for the Church of God whatever they did in their restless rashness! They would, nonetheless, not have been brought to this healthy position if they were not bound, like men out of their minds, by the chains of these laws that you find displeasing. What about that other form of the most grave disease of those who do not, of course, have this turbulent audacity, but are weighed down by long-standing apathy and say to us, “What you say is of course, true; we have no answer to make, but it is hard for us to abandon the tradition of our parents”? Were they not to be disturbed for their salvation by the penalty of temporal chastisement in order that they might emerge, as it were, from their sluggish sleepiness and wake up in the salvation of the Church’s unity? How many of them are now rejoicing with us and blame the former burden of their destructive activity!¹⁴

The sudden and decisive change to the way in which Christianity in North Africa was to move forward had arrived. In this letter we see the effect of the new laws having been implemented. The dating of this letter is also revealing as it comes just after Augustine had preached the first sixteen anti-Donatist tractates. It also shows us that Augustine was successful in converting the new and decisive Imperial pressure into converts. Nevertheless, what we turn to is that challenge of turning chastisement into Christian charity.

The Edict had brought about a new and exciting possibility for unity, but it also brought with it other challenges. For years Donatists and Catholics had lived in a relative ‘modus vivendi’

¹⁴ AU ep, 93.2 (WSA, II: 2), 378; ‘o si possem tibi ostendere, ex ipsis Circumcellionibus quam multos iam catholicos manifestos habeamus damnantes suam pristinam uitam et miserabilem errorem, quo se arbitrabantur pro ecclesia dei facere, quicquid inquieta temeritate faciebant! qui tamen ad hanc sanitatem non perducerentur, nisi legum istarum, quae tibi displicent, uinculis tamquam phrenetici ligarentur. quid illud alterum genus morbi grauissimi eorum, qui turbulentam quidem audaciam non habebant, sed quadam uetusta socordia premebantur dicentes nobis: uerum quidem dicitis; non est, quod respondeatur; sed durum est nobis traditionem parentum relinquere? nonne salubriter regula temporalium molestiarum excutiendi erant, ut tamquam de somno lethargico emergerent et in salutem unitatis euigilarent? quam multi et ex ipsis nunc nobiscum gaudentes pristinum pondus perniciosi sui operis accusant et fatentur nos sibi molestos esse debuisse. (CSEL, 34: 2,447).

yet separated and divided by strict and enduring traditions. As we see in his letter to Vincentius, when Augustine preached on the gospel of John, Catholics and Donatists stood and listened side by side. Opinion over who had listened to Augustine preaching has long been the subject of debate,¹⁵ yet one thing is clear, from 406-407, within the time frame of Augustine's first sermons on John, both were present. On this point, Allan Fitzgerald in his lecture, 'Engaging the Gospel of John' makes the point: 'Augustine saw that the real challenge was to teach those who had come to communion in the Catholic church what their leaders had hidden from them. Just as importantly, Augustine had to teach the Catholic community to welcome former Donatists.'¹⁶ In other words, the issue wasn't just assimilating Donatists to Catholic unity—it was reminding Catholics to receive them with love rather than as conquered victims; for 'a city is made up of its citizens, not its walls'.¹⁷ Augustine understood that a true and abiding unity was to be forged in love—anything less would not be a substantial basis for a future together. Nothing less than love would bind the community together: As Augustine states: 'After another miracle, some five thousand more joined them; thus was formed a single, considerable people, in which all received the Holy Spirit who kindled spiritual love in them and bound them together as one by that charity and fervour of spirit. Thus, people began, within the unity of that fellowship'.¹⁸

The phrase, '*societatis unitate*' is key to understanding Augustine's notion of the 're-forging' of the Church as it conveys an implicit notion of a united fellowship. Augustine was all too aware of the divergent notions of the Church and remaining faithful to the African legacy of Cyprian and the martyrs. Yet, divergence and difference lay at the heart of what the community of faith must

¹⁵ See, n7.

¹⁶ Fitzgerald, (2017), 11.

¹⁷ AU urb, 6, (trans, mine); 'ciuitatem in parietibus et non in ciuibus'. (CCSL, 46: 258). See, Markus, (1970), 149-153.

¹⁸ AU Jo, 39.5, 590; 'item alio facto quodam miraculo, accesserunt alia quinque millia; facta est plebs una non parua, in qua omnes accepto spiritu sancto, quo amor spiritalis accensus est, caritate ipsa et feruore spiritus in unum redacti, coeperunt in ipsa societatis unitate uendere omnia quae habebant.' (CCSL, 36: 347).

be, bound together in one Spirit, with one aim under one roof. Augustine stresses that it is God the Holy Spirit who binds the Church together, it is God's love which enables it—it is Christ befriending which arrests it. The pneumatological component to his polemic is a central feature in the Church being a mixed economy. Augustine sought to cement in the minds of his listener, as Grabowski succinctly states, that 'the earthly union is only a foreshadowing of the one that will take place in reality for all eternity'.¹⁹ The ecclesiology of Augustine is most vividly discerned in his hermeneutic of the parable of the wheat and the tares (Mt 13:24-30).²⁰ This image of the Church was familiar to both parties. Yet Augustine had understood it in a way that reflects his ecclesiology. He takes issue to correct Donatists on their understanding:

Hence, along with us, let them rebuke to the utmost the weeds and the chaff of the Catholic crop, but, along with us, let them not refuse to tolerate them with great patience. For [the Lord] did not wish to uproot the weeds and to separate them from the mingled grain ahead of time. *Let them both grow, he said, until the harvest* (Mt 13:30). And, when he disclosed the meaning of the same parable to his disciples who were asking him, he did not say, "the field is Africa," but he said. *The field is this world* (Mt 13:38). This crop, then, has been sown throughout the whole world, with weeds sown over it everywhere, and they are both growing everywhere until the harvest. Was Donatus a greater harvester [than the Lord], or had the time of the harvest arrived when [The Donatists] separated themselves from the whole world, although the same Lord says very openly, lest anyone allow himself to interpret according to his own whim, *The harvest is the end of the age, and the angels are the harvesters* (Mt 13:39)?²¹

This informs us of how he understood the Church going forward. It would be a place for all, both the good and the bad. This is significant because Augustine never takes his eye off the Catholic component to this re-forging as they are in need as much as any in seeking the love of God and neighbour. He was all too aware of the 'tares' amongst Catholics. At the time of his preaching on the Johannine books; he reiterates that: 'many the Church has of perjurers, cheats, sorcerers, fortune-tellers, adulterers, drunkards, money-lenders, dishonest tradesmen and all the

¹⁹ Grabowski (1957), 44.

²⁰ See also, AU Pet, 2.45; AU ba, 4.13. On the extensive use of Mt 13:25-30, the wheat and the tares within the history of North African ecclesiology see, Dunn (2017), 371-401.

²¹ *c. ep. Parm.* 1.21 (WSA, I: 21), 293. (CSEL, 51:42).

things that we cannot number—they are contrary to the teaching of Christ’.²² Yet out of this community Christ would in the end reveal his true friends, those who had been the ‘wheat’ amongst the tares. Within the unity of the Church, God would bring to his eternal future those who had dwelt deeply within the bosom of the Church as true members of his body—the saints. Those whom he calls within the *Tractatus*, ‘The seasoned timbers that will not rot are the saints, the believers who belong to Christ’.²³

Donatists would not abide in belonging to Catholics and vice versa. Both had to re-focus upon a common aim which led to a future with Christ—in Christ. To re-focus the aim on the future was to shift the conversation on from a corrosive past to a charitable future. The love of God was to be the binding force in a cohesive community dwelling within the Body of Christ. They were to love each other for ‘God’s sake’ if not for their own and for a future as *amicus Christi*. The Roman State had provided the fear, Augustine capitalised upon this to convert it into faith—faith as members of Christ’s body bound in friendship governed by the law of love.

The Law of Love

Central to the notion of love for Augustine was the fulfilment of the great command, to love God and neighbour ‘as yourself’.²⁴ Augustine believed that every human being was a

²² AU I Jo, 3.9, 59; ‘quotquot enim habet ecclesia periuros, fraudatores, maleficos, sortilegorum inquisitores, adulteros, ebriosos, foeneratores, mangones, et omnia quae numerare non possumus; contraria sunt doctrinae Christi’. (PL, 35: 2002).

²³ AU Jo, 6.19, 138; ‘imputribilia ligna sancti sunt, fideles pertinentes ad Christum’. (CCSL, 36: 63).

²⁴ The passage from Mt 22:39, ‘Diliges inquit proximum tuum tamquam te ipsum’, Augustine quotes over 270 times. The author notes that there are slight variant alternations in the rendering. For example, only in two places does it correspond the the Vg rendering, ‘diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsu’. The alternation being, ‘tamquam/sicut’. Jülicher reports two Old Latin manuscripts which read tamquam in 22:39: Codex Colbertinus (c, VL 6) and Codex Palatinus (e, VL 2). See, Adolf Jülicher, Walter Matzkow & Kurt Aland,

neighbour and therefore should be loved (AU Ps, 102.13).²⁵ At a primordial level he understood this as a natural good to love all human beings as all are made in the *imago dei*²⁶ and therefore occupy the summit of the created order, for, ‘Every human being is the neighbour to every other human being’.²⁷ All things that exist are good and therefore are to be loved. Humans occupying the summit of material beings are to be loved by virtue of their dignity being made in the image and likeness of God. For Augustine, the hierarchy of beings is closely related to the hierarchy of love.²⁸ On a primordial level, humans should be loved, but Augustine came to understand the command to love, ‘as yourself’ in distinctively teleological and ecclesial terms. To love as yourself, as to wish them well, to see them share in the *summa bonus* which fulfils them as your friends. This has classical overtones, yet it captures Augustine’s impulse to *persuasa* and secure his friends in the one he is secured in.²⁹ This impulse to evangelise remained a central feature of his call for others to share in the fullness he had found. A good example of this follows on from the quotation above from AU disc, 3, which talks about all humans being neighbours and is crystallised at the end of that paragraph in that ‘*ad id quod christianus es, unus pater est deus, una mater ecclesia.*’ Which chimes with Cyprian’s notion, ‘*habere iam non potest Deum patrem qui ecclesiam non habet matrem.*’³⁰ Love

(1963–76) *Itala. Das Neue Testament in altlateinischer Überlieferung. I. Matthäus-Evangelium*. 2nd edn. (1972); *II. Marcus-Evangelium*. 2nd edn. (1970); *I. Lucas-Evangelium*. 2nd edn. (1976); *IV. Johannes-Evangelium* (1963). Berlin: De Gruyter. See also, van Bavel (1986).

²⁵ See, van Bavel (1986), 174.

²⁶ Gerald Boersma (2016) is worthy of special attention on Augustine’s notion of ‘Image’ as he demonstrates how Augustine’s notion differs from his predecessors of the western ‘Pro-Nicene’ party in placing the notion of ‘image’ as a feature of God rather than of representation within the material world.

²⁷ AU disc, 3, (trans, mine) ‘proximus est omni homini omnis homo.’ (CCSL, 46: 210)

²⁸ AU do, 1.27–30.

²⁹ For example, on Augustine’s use of *persuasa* see AU ep, 255. We also see this imperative in his description of calling Romanianus to join him in his newfound Catholic faith: ‘Accordingly, we can do nothing for you but pray, so that by our prayers we may win, if we can, the favour from that God who has a care of these things that He bring you back to your true self—and in doing so He will bring you back to us’ (ACW, 12), 35.

³⁰ CY un, 6.

directed elsewhere, or upon the self was not love. To be directed towards one's base desires and enjoyment was not to love one's self but to abhor one's self whether knowingly or not. In short, one could only love one's neighbour if one was fixed upon the fulfilment of one's own being in Christ within his Church. To love one's neighbour was only possible as a Christian, dwelling within the one *Ecclesia Catholica*. For this reason, Augustine conceived of the great command in terms of what can be described as ecclesial teleology.

In *de doctrina christiana* Augustine comes to his most advanced and explicit understanding of 'loving one's neighbour as one's self'. The right order of love in terms of neighbour comes before a greater digression on the nature of things (*res*) in relation to themselves and to God. He elucidates the meaning of things in relation to God into two categories: use (*uti*) and enjoyment (*frui*). As God occupies the summit of being, all things relate to themselves or to the hierarchy under these two categories which indicate the orientation of the nature of the *res* being described. Only God is the unchanging reality from whom and in whom all things originate and subsist in. In a technical sense, God therefore is not a 'thing' but the cause of things (*si tamen res et non rerum omnium causa*).³¹ The command to love is in essence about the direction and orientation of one's true end, *telos*. For a thing that is directed towards itself loves one's self for one's aims and 'enjoyment'. For Augustine, 'enjoyment' is fraught with notions of self-love and self-deprivation³² The term '*uti*' on the other hand, indicates the priority of the 'good' over and above 'enjoyment' which is located in the fulfilment of temporal and often bodily pleasure.³³ Neighbours, within this framework of 'use' and 'enjoyment' can only truly be loved by one who is himself not 'enjoyed' by others or himself, but 'used' by God for God's purposes and pleasure: 'because all these things are to be loved for God's sake'.³⁴ In terms of friendship, it is only within a true ecclesial friendship

³¹ AU do, 1.5. (Simonetti, 24-5).

³² See, O'Donovan (1980); van Bavel, (1999), 511-2.

³³ See AU do, 1.27.

³⁴ AU do, 1.28.

that this law could be fulfilled, as the Church is the body of Christ. Nevertheless, without qualification, these categories of ‘use’ and ‘enjoyment’ could be construed as contentions. Augustine’s broader vision of love is essentially about ‘beings’ becoming what God had intended them to become; for humanity that meant reaching the goal of God himself. By participation, humanity is elevated into union: “‘The Selfsame’ here is to be understood of that supreme and changeless good which is God, and his wisdom and his will. Another psalm sings these words of praise to him: *You change the heavens and they are changed, but you are the selfsame* (Ps 102:26).³⁵ Therefore, the Church being the only means of salvation is underpinned by his trinitarian teleology. By this he means that all things directed upon their true ends (God), are to be ‘used’ for the ‘sake of God’ alone to whom we belong. This notion of self-love and estrangement is for Augustine the root of all division as it is the fruit of pride. Enjoyment within this context concerns things directed towards their own temporality and transitory pleasures. Only God, the unchanging being is to be ‘enjoyed’. Therefore, for Augustine, to love one’s neighbour as one’s self is to love them in or into God and his Church. As Oliver O’Donovan succinctly states, ‘love of the neighbour is evangelism’.³⁶ Augustine connects this and describes it in terms of friendship:

Two things in this world are necessary, health and friends: these two things are of great value, which we ought not to disregard. For health and friends are natural goods. God made human beings, that these things might be for life. Health is not being alone; therefore, friendship is sought out. Friendship therefore begins between spouse and sons. They progress as far as they are able as far as it belongs to the other. Yet, if we consider we have one mother and father (Eve and Adam), who is a stranger? Everyone is close to another. Inquire of nature! Is this unknown? Is the man an enemy? Is he hostile? Is he a friend? Therefore, make friends with an enemy that he may become a friend.³⁷

³⁵ AU tri, 3.8 (WSA, I: 5), 131; ‘idipsum quippe hoc loco illud summum et incommutabile bonum intellegitur quod deus est atque sapientia uoluntasque ipsius, cui cantatur alio loco: mutabis ea et mutabuntur; tu autem idem ipse es [Ps 101,27sq.]’. (CCSL, 50: 131).

³⁶ O’Donovan (1980), 112.

³⁷ AU s Den, 16.1 (trans, mine); ‘necessaria sunt in hoc mundo duo ista, salus et amicus: ista sunt, quae magni pendere, quae non debemus contemnere. salus et amicus, naturalia bona sunt. fecit deus hominem, ut esset et uiueret: salus est; sed, ne solus esset, amicitia quaesita est. incipit ergo amicitia a coniuge et filiis, et progreditur usque ad alienos. sed si

Loving one's neighbour for Augustine was an essential good, found in nature and commanded by God. It was an essential grace that poured from loving God as the source and summit of all things. Yet, in the context of the Donatist schism, it forges the pastoral context of how Augustine understands how friendship is deployed within the broader scheme of his call to love neighbour as himself and the wider pastoral context of unifying a dis-united and divided congregation on the question of dealing with each other. The context of loving 'your neighbour as yourself' is born out within a community that has known nothing but division and enmity between those who claim to be Christians.

Donatist and Catholics indeed had been Christians but also bitter enemies. To love them was to call himself and Catholics to see in Donatists the *imago Dei* and the fulfilment of the law. Augustine sets a challenge for his community, to see in the 'other' the true ends of one's being the *summum bonum*, which he describes as the heavenly Jerusalem. In the preaching on the Psalms of ascent (AU Ps, 119-133),³⁸ Augustine exhorts the community to aim for unity of purpose forged within a holy fellowship *quia caritas Dei* (AU do, IV.14). Augustine preaches peace and the bond of love as the fruit of dwelling within the Church, which is the community on pilgrimage to the true ends of life. He addressed them:

For the sake of the house of the Lord my God I have sought your good. I have sought good things indeed, but not for myself, for then I would have been seeking good not for you but for me, and I would not even have gained any good myself, because I was not seeking it for you. No, it is for the sake of the house of the Lord my God that I have preached: for the Church, for saints, for pilgrims, for the needy, so that they may make the ascent.

consideremus unum nos habuisse patrem et unam matrem, quis erit alienus? omni homini proximus est omnis homo. interroga naturam. ignotus est? homo est. inimicus est? homo est. hostis est? homo est. amicus est? maneat amicus. inimicus est? fiat amicus.' (s. Denis, 16.1; MA 1,75/2); see also, AU disc, 3.3.

³⁸ See, Ployd (2015), 2.

To them we say, *we are going to the Lord's house. It is for the sake of the house of the Lord my God that I have sought your good.*³⁹

Augustine re-casts the conversation of the communities focus upon one another and clothes it in Christ. He shifts the focus of immediacy of the community's preoccupations in dealing with one another, towards the goal of the next world and of the means by which they traverse there—Christ being the answer to both the means and the goal. In this sense, Christ is akin to Charon (Χάρων) who ferries souls to the elysian field. Within the *Tractatus*, Augustine will, as we shall see (Chapter 5), embed these notions in figurative and imaginative ways. Augustine deploys images familiar to both parties such as the wheat and tares, as we have seen. The images of the Church as 'ark' and 'dove' provide rich theological soil for Augustine's rhetorical hermeneutic. He will reiterate his notion of the Church being a community of mediocrity consisting of both the good and the bad. Using the image of the ark and the dove he states:

How fitting it was that when the crow was sent out from the ark it did not return, while when the dove was sent out it did come back—those are the two birds that Noah sent out! He had a crow with him there, he also had a dove; the ark contained each kind of bird; and if the ark was representing the Church (*figurabat ecclesiam*), you can of course see how it must be that, in these unsettled times, the Church has both sorts both the crow and the dove. Who are the crows? Those who look after their own interests. Who the doves? Those who look after Christ's interests.⁴⁰

³⁹ AU Ps, 121.14 (WSA, III: 20), 19; 'propter domum domini dei mei, quaesiui bona tibi [Ps 121,9]. non propter me quaesiui bona, nam non tibi quaererem, sed mihi; ideo nec ego haberem, quia non tibi quaererem, sed, propter domum domini dei mei [Ps 121,9], propter ecclesiam, propter sanctos, propter peregrinos, propter inopes, ut adscendant; quia dicimus eis: in domum domini ibimus [Ps 121,1]; propter ipsam domum domini dei mei, quaesiui bona tibi [Ps 121,8]'. (CCSL, 40: 1813).

⁴⁰ AU Jo, 6.2, 122-3; 'merito de arca missus est coruus, et non est reuersus; missa est columba, et reuersa est: illas duas aues misit Noe. habebat ibi coruum, habebat et columbam; utrumque hoc genus arca illa continebat; et si arca figurabat ecclesiam, uidetis utique quia necesse est ut in isto diluuio saeculi utrumque genus contineat ecclesia, et coruum, et columbam. qui sunt corui? qui sua quaerunt. qui columbae? qui ea quae Christi sunt quaerunt'. (CCSL, 36: 54).

The key to his notion of the Church is expressed within the term, *‘figurabat ecclesiam’*,⁴¹ in which Augustine exhorts them to represent Christ by dwelling deeply within its bosom—being true members of the Church on earth. Augustine is calling both parties to not represent their ‘interest’ and agendas but the interest and aims of Christ and his kingdom.

This notion of living out the law of love within the Church is what the representatives of Christ are called to do. Augustine applies the pressure of suggesting that those who are self-concerned and ignore the call to be friends of Christ forfeit their membership of being within the one true Church. Augustine here is also playing on the fact that membership is a divine participation within the very life of the Trinity. Christ is the way into the very life of God—the one through whom man and God are coupled together—bound together in sacred union. His doctrine of the Trinity in relation to the Church underpins his entire project of drawing a community towards the one in whom they become one:

What then, after all that, is this love or charity which the divine scriptures praise and proclaim so much, but love of the good? Now love means someone loving and something loved with love. There you are with three, the lover, what is being loved, and love. And what is love but a kind of life coupling or trying to couple together two things, namely lover and what is being loved? This is true even of the most external and fleshly kinds of love. But in order to quaff something purer and more limpid, let us trample on the flesh and rise to the spirit. What does the spirit love in a friend but spirit? So here again there are three, lover and what is being loved, and love.⁴²

At the heart of his understanding of love and indeed friendship was that it was a binding a conjugation of souls. Thus, participation in the Church, the Spirit conjugated the souls into one spiritual friendship—binding them into Christ as His body. Augustine elsewhere exhorts his

⁴¹ See, Brown, (2020).

⁴² AU tri, 8.10.14 (WSA, I: 5), 257; ‘quid est autem dilectio uel caritas quam tantopere scriptura diuina laudat et praedicat nisi amor boni? amor autem alicuius amantis est, et amore aliquid amatur. ecce tria sunt, amans et quod amatur et amor. quid est ergo amor nisi quaedam uita duo aliqua copulans uel copulari appetens, amantem scilicet et quod amatur? et hoc etiam in extremis carnalibusque amoribus ita est. sed ut aliquid purius et liquidius hauriamus calcata carne ascendamus ad animum. quid amat animus in amico nisi animum? et illic igitur tria sunt, amans et quod amatur et amor.’ (CCSL, 50: 291).

people to submit themselves to. ‘the gentle authority of Christ’s law, which is charity’,⁴³ as a mark of Christian humility, a key *signum* of ecclesial friendship.

Fulfilling the law of love meant becoming agents of God’s love, not being consumed by the past and the residual pain of abiding resentment but focusing upon the future, aiming for the heavenly reward and journeying together as a band of *amicus sponsi*.⁴⁴ As a newly reconfigured community, they belonged to each other by virtue of Christ and therefore of the Trinity which binds all in all and leads them forwards. Therefore, being friends of Christ meant being agents of the Church, of one another; they were to see each other as agents of the future and to be signs not of themselves but of Christ as his body. Augustine would waste no time in drawing in those whom he desired to have forever. True friendships would be founded upon the *Ecclesia Catholica*, which alone is rooted in the Trinity via the *totus Christus*—through which the Spirit binds. The Trinity provided the ontological source for his ‘epistemological praxis’ through which the tensions of plurality and unity, as well as ontological distinction could be held together. The central event through which its members are imputed with the Spirit by virtue was that of the incarnation conveyed at Baptism. Within the *Ecclesia Catholica* Augustine finds the nexus upon which all inner and outer tensions find fulfilment and their dynamic reorientation. The call to be friends with Christ was to be a *signum* of the *signum* that is Christ,⁴⁵ the manifestation of God through which, ‘ut sit deus omnia in omnibus’ (1 Cor. 15:28). It was belonging to the incarnate Christ that forged the theological bridge of reciprocal investment between ontologically divergent beings.⁴⁶ In the act of grace—

⁴³ AU tri, 1. 6 (WSA, I: 5), 69; ‘admonet me plane ac mihi iubet suauissimo imperio lex Christi, hoc est caritas’. (CCSL, 50: 34).

⁴⁴ I shall deal with this notion of John the Baptist in Chapter 5, as John is a model of faithful ministry which includes the whole Church.

⁴⁵ On this point Rowan Williams (2016), states: ‘There is one authorised ‘sign’ which for once we cannot mistake for anything *but* a sign. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus are *res* in the worlds history’. 45.

⁴⁶ See, Monagle, (1971), 81.

God-befriending enters into Augustine's life and Augustine enters into the source of love itself. A profound sense of gratitude becomes indelibly affixed to this new life of faith, for if love is to find its rest in another: 'This is what we love in friends. We love to the point that the human conscience feels guilty if we do not love the person who is loving us'.⁴⁷ This finds new meaning within the theology of the incarnation as the expression of the outpouring of divine love which is offered up into the Trinity. All other forms of union for Augustine became swiftly demarcated as transient and mutable for they were held within the aims of creation corrupted by sin; not in the humility of the uncreated God who became man. Therefore, just as Augustine had journeyed with his small band drawing them into 'agreement' within his worldview, he also employed the same imperialist attitude to friendship as a Catholic bishop. Augustine, as he had done with his inner circle, sought to do likewise with Donatists who must be delivered through the 'wood of the cross'⁴⁸ subjecting themselves to Catholic episcopacy. If he was to do them good, he had to befriend them in Christ, as he had his friends, if they were to prevail in the love of God, so that he may have them forever in the '*gloriosissimam civitatem dei*'.⁴⁹ For Augustine, a city is made of its members, which are sealed by the Holy Spirit incorporated into the very fabric of the Church as Christ's earthly body.

Schism was a *signa* of temporal and misdirected love, rooted in the sinful pride of humanity: 'for friendship of this world is fornication against you'.⁵⁰ Friends were the

⁴⁷ AU cf, 4.14, 61; 'hoc est, quod diligitur in amicis et sic diligitur, ut rea sibi sit humana conscientia, si non amauerit redamantem aut si amantem non redamauerit'. (CCSL, 27: 47).

⁴⁸ The image of the 'wood of the Cross' for Augustine is linked to Noah's ark, a well-established African image of the church. Here this passage captures Augustine's theology of the church as Christ through which we return home. AU Jo, 1.16, 9.11, 13.26

⁴⁹ AU ci, 1.1 (praef), (CCSL, 47: 1); AU rel, 12-13, is a good example of Augustine appealing to his long-term friend and patron Romanianus to embrace the Catholic faith, at which the Trinity, the fountain of love is central. (CCSL, 32: 195-7).

⁵⁰ AU cf, 1.21, 16; 'non te amabam et fornicabar abs te [Ps 72,27] et fornicanti sonabat undique: euge, euge [Ps 39,16]. amicitia enim mundi huius fornicatio est abs te [Ps 72,27]'. (CCSL, 27: 11).

representation of the reality that bound them, friendship the *signum* of God who is the absolute *res*.⁵¹ The friends you participated in signified the truth to which you belonged and lived by. They indicate your own salvation and epidemiological praxis, ‘moral epistemology’. The friend for Augustine is the outward *signum* of the union of the inward *animus* that is either resting upon God or something created by God. Being beyond the bounds of the Church indicated inward desolation. The *circumcellions* are Augustine’s exhibit A in this regard.

As we have seen, in terms of friendships before his conversion, Augustine had used his friends for *his* ‘enjoyment’, something he came to recognise as an ‘abuse’.⁵² Afterwards, however, he came to view friends, along with himself to be used for their ‘enjoyment’ in the Trinity where all things find their *telos*.⁵³ This is more than saying that the *telos* of one’s own *esse* is merely directed towards the Trinity—but rather it must be nestled within. The incarnation of the Word is the primordial *signum* in a world that was made, in order that creation to points beyond itself. Rowan Williams captures this sentiment: ‘The Word’s taking of flesh is not a dissolving of history as eternal truth takes over some place where he was not before. Rather the incarnation manifests the essential quality of the world itself as ‘sign’ or trace of its maker’.⁵⁴ Thus, the incarnation is corrective within a world of sinful misdirection. Through his notion of the Church as Christ’s present body, Christians become signs of God’s sign. It is God’s sign that directs the nature of the Christian as called to enjoy themselves and others within God’s own life as Trinity.

⁵¹ It is not my intent to forge a new path in Augustine’s theory of semiotics but rather to deploy it within the theme of friendship. For a background of Augustine’s understanding of ‘signs’ see, Markus, (1994), ‘St Augustine on Signs’, [reprinted in, *Sacred and Secular*]. For Augustine’s development from *de Magistro* to *de doctrina Christina*, which moves from a ‘disjunctive’ view to a more sacramental ‘conjunctive’ views of ‘signs’ and their relation to ‘*res*’ see, Cameron, ‘signs’, *ATA*, 793-798.

⁵² AU do, 1.4.

⁵³ AU do, 1.5-7.

⁵⁴ Williams, (2016), 45.

In presenting the Church as the place of God's kingdom as opposed to the world of Empire, Augustine's understanding of friendship stands as a corrective to Donatist concerns about the purity of the Church. Augustine frames the notion of belonging in terms of representation. Unlike the world, which he knew well, friendship with God begins upon arrival. It is not worked for or created by our initial efforts. The Church was radically different. Within the hierarchy of love within the world, the emperor occupied the pinnacle of power. In the story of a friend's conversion Augustine outlines this in vivid detail:

Can we hope for any higher office in the palace than to be Friends of the Emperor? And in that position what is not fragile and full of dangers? How many hazards must one risk to attain to a position of even greater danger? And when will we arrive there? Whereas, if I wish to become God's friend, in an instant I may become that now.⁵⁵

This description displays Augustine's notion of the hierarchy of love and what it meant to ascend beyond the limits of love on earth to that of becoming a friend of God through Christ. Augustine's call is to become signs of a future glory and to offer their lives for God's use by which their lives could be truly enjoyed. He exhorts them to remain in the Church and to remain in 'the protection of the heavenly emperor',⁵⁶ Christ the true ruler of all. Friendship began by belonging, by remaining one deepened it until its fulfilment in heaven.

As we shall see, the contrast between the community of God and those beyond its bounds is illustrated through the scriptural characters (see below) who are juxtaposed with those who have not entered into the 'wood of the cross', without which, we cannot 'cross the sea of this world unless carried over it on the cross of Christ'.⁵⁷ Augustine makes this point

⁵⁵ AU cf, 8. 15, 143; 'maiorne esse poterit spes nostra in palatio, quam ut amici imperatoris simus? et ibi quid non fragile plenumque periculis? et per quot pericula peruenitur ad grandius periculum? et quando istuc erit? amicus autem dei, si uolueris, ecce nunc fio'. (CCSL, 27: 123).

⁵⁶ AU cf, 7. 27, 132; 'caelestis imperatoris'. (CCSL, 27: 112).

⁵⁷ AU Jo, 2.2.

through his hermeneutics of Scripture. It is also the act of involvement in the written word as a performative art of participation, the liturgy being the stage for the divine play upon which the saints of Scripture are drawn forth giving a living example of authentic Christian friendship. It is a live participation in the Scripture through which the *Verbum* manifests the glory of the Father through the Spirit, who calls the ‘listener’ to perform their part as a living signifier. The act of presenting oneself before the ‘divine play’ is a trinitarian act of illumination and spiritual immersion in God through the story of his Word.⁵⁸ Within this matrix, Augustine delivers his message through the scriptural stories calling the hearers into the ongoing drama of salvation. As Grabowski states: ‘Loving a superior spirit we are elevated and participate in his excellence: in a word, we become divine’.⁵⁹ In Augustine’s *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus*, we see the theme of ecclesial friendship.

This relates to Augustine’s notion of the foundation of friendship being a union of souls. What makes friendship is that it is a participation of *anima* within a reciprocal and mutual love which brings the perfection of both/all.⁶⁰ By transferring the essence of friendship to God and the inner life of the Trinity (as we see in chapter 2), it becomes a transferable property from created human being into the eternal uncreated love of God—the Holy Spirit. Thus, the cornerstone of friendship for Augustine is that of a network of participating *anima* that within the Church becomes embedded within the life of the Trinity through the Holy Spirit which ensouls both Catholics and Donatists into one *ecclesia societatis unitate*. In other words, Augustine transfers the property of friendship being a dwelling within

⁵⁸ Scanlon (1994), makes the point that the communication of the gospel is a ‘living tradition of the Christian community’, by which the ‘Primary religious language is the performative speech of Christian praxis which is worship and witness. This is the speech of the liturgical re-enactment of the Christian story with its imaginatively evocative power in narrative, metaphor, and symbol. The sematic/pragmatic finality of this speech praxis is ultimately salvation and, in the meantime, the making of disciples’. 45, 47.

⁵⁹ Grabowski (1957), 50.

⁶⁰ Jaeger (1992).

each other to a proposition of dwelling together in Christ through his Spirit. For Augustine, this is the security of retaining friends forever as they are kept safe in the soul of God who binds them together in one body, makes them one with Christ as his corporate members.

*Ex Pluribus Unum Facere*⁶¹

As we have seen, the notion of unity amongst friends is not a new idea in the age of Augustine. Arguably as the founding father of European philosophy, Pythagoras bequeathed a rich and abiding inheritance to subsequent generations. Illustrious thinkers such as Pythagoras, Plato and especially Aristotle endeavoured to build philosophy upon which communities could be founded. The notion of universal brotherhood and that of a cosmic centred notion of friendship as a universal quality of human beings presented by Pythagoras and metaphysically reborn in Plato became a central topic of reflection. In the ancient world, philosophies of society were a primary point of concern. This legacy on complete unity, as White notes: ‘is taken very seriously by Augustine’.⁶² Prior to his episcopacy a uniformity of ‘agreement’ and being one in *anima* was the ideal of his close-knit circle of the ‘servus Dei’. As we have seen in the previous chapter, unity and uniformity of purpose and of mind (soul as well) was a fundamental law of friendship. In applying his notion of friendship and that of his pneumatological Pro-Nicene theology as a foundation for his ecclesiology, Augustine cements, ‘*compages*’ the notion of the Spirit as the only valid currency with which one may exchange of ‘*animo usque ad animum*’. This, ‘marks the brightly lit pathway of friendship’ (AU cf, II.2, see n12, Ch2). As we have seen, Cicero remained the major influence over Augustine’s

⁶¹ AU cf, 4.13; AU tri, 6.4; AU Ps 133.3; Cicero, *Amic*, 25, ‘Nam cum amicitiae vis sit in eo ut unus quasi animus fiat ex pluribus’. (LCL, 154: 92), 198-199; Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.17, ‘quod Pythagoras vult in amicitia, ut unus fiat ex pluribus. (LCL, 30: 54), 58-59.

⁶² White (1992), 188.

formation in friendship and it is from this common source that he gains this notion of unity between many in order to be one in friendship:

But of all the bonds of fellowship, there is none friendship, more noble, none more powerful than when good men of congenial character are joined in intimate friendship; for really, if we discover in another that moral goodness on which I dwell so much, it attracts us and makes us friends to the one in whose character it seems to dwell. And while every virtue attracts us and makes us love those who seem to possess it, still justice and generosity do so most of all. Nothing, moreover, is more conducive to love and intimacy than compatibility of character in good men; for when two people have the same ideals and the same tastes, it is a natural consequence that each loves the other as himself; and the result is, as Pythagoras requires of ideal friendship, that several are united in one (*unus fiat ex pluribus*)⁶³

In this, as Cicero draws out, it is argued that the unity of souls is predicated upon alignment of character and virtue, to be in ‘agreement on things human and divine’. Augustine, however, does not disregard this, but shifts it into his matrix of a theology of the Trinity in relation to the body of Christ. As we have seen with his personal friendships, in which he held them in himself—he now holds them in Christ along with himself. Within the Christian body, the Spirit becomes the founding principle of the Pythagorean ideal, that of a community of souls, ‘*unus fiat ex pluribus*’. This is a view which underpins his notion of the body of Christ. That his ecclesiology becomes enmeshed with the notion of the Church being the fulfilment of philosophy.⁶⁴ In terms of friendship this is clearly borne out.

⁶³ Cicero, *Off.* ‘Sed omnium societatum nulla praestantior est, nulla firmior, quam cum viri boni moribus similes sunt familiaritate coniuncti; illud enim honestum, quod saepe dicimus, etiam si in alio cernimus, [tamen]2 nos movet atque illi, in quo id inesse videtur, amicos 56facit. Et quamquam omnis virtus nos ad se allicit facitque, ut eos diligamus, in quibus ipsa inesse videatur, tamen iustitia et liberalitas id maxime efficit. Nihil autem est amabilius nec copulatus quam morum similitudo bonorum; in quibus enim eadem studia sunt, eadem voluntates, in iis fit ut aequae quisque altero delectetur ac se ipso, efficiturque id, quod Pythagoras vult in amicitia, ut unus fiat ex pluribus’. (LCL, 30: 17.56), 58-59.

⁶⁴ AU Jul, 4.72; ‘quam nostra christiana, quae una est vera philosophia’. (PL 44: 774).

In Augustine's own writings, we see this reflected in his notion of friends. We have seen this in Chapter two, within his dealings with the Donatist schism we see it displayed. Within his anti-Donatist sermons it is clearly present:

May the Lord bless you from Zion, he who made heaven and earth. The exhortation to bless the Lord was addressed to many, but his blessing descended upon only one, because he has made one out of many (*ex pluribus unum fecit*), as we heard: How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!⁶⁵

This comes in between his sustain polemic which runs throughout these sermons. Yet it comes between a call to 'stand and listen' and not to be like the devil who did not stand in the truth. Here Augustine is drawing a comparison between the congregations standing within the Catholic basilica with those who remained outside. The first passage which it is nestled between is this. He states: '*He (the Devil) did not stand in the truth* (Jn 8:44). Of the bridegroom's friend, on the contrary, scripture says, *But the bridegroom's friend, who stands and hears him, rejoices intensely at the bridegroom's voice* (Jn 3:29).'⁶⁶ (I shall return to this theme in Chapter 6). The second is a call to unity: 'He blesses only one. Make sure you belong within that unity, and then the blessing has reached you as well'.⁶⁷ Augustine places this notion of friendship, '*unus fiat ex pluribus*' within a context of 'standing and listening' to a friend of Christ (himself as a Bishop) through which in unity they may share in this union as long as they abide within

⁶⁵ AU Ps, 133.3 (WSA, III: 20), 213; 'benedicat te dominus ex Sion, qui fecit caelum et terram [Ps 133,3]. plures hortatur ut benedicant, et ipse unum benedicit, quia ex pluribus unum fecit; quia bonum et iucundum

est habitare fratres in unum [Ps 132,1]. pluralis numerus, fratres [Ps 132,1]; sed singularis, habitare in unum'. (CCSL, 40: 1937).

⁶⁶ AU Ps, 133.1 (WSA, III: 20), 212; 'et in ueritate non stetit [Io 8,44]; et dictum est de amico sponsi: amicus autem sponsi stat, et audit eum, et gaudio gaudet propter uocem sponsi [Io 3,29]'. (CCSL, 40: 1936).

⁶⁷ AU Ps, 133.3 (WSA, III: 20), 213; 'unum benedixit. Esto unum, et peruenit ad te benedictio'. (CCSL, 40: 1937).

Christ in order they remains blessed as a friend. As we shall see, we also find this within *Tractatus*.

Augustine also connects this notion with Scripture. The passage from Acts provided fertile ground for this classical ideal of friendship: ‘Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common’.⁶⁸ James McEvoy’s article, ‘Anima una et cor unum: Friendship and Spiritual Unity in Augustine’, stands out as singularly illuminating on this topic. McEvoy’s article draws attention to friendship being the bedrock of Augustine’s notion of communal living in which rather than seeking wisdom *par se*, it is together they dwell in wisdom as one. He draws out the central notion through the ideal apostolic life which is a pattern for friendship in that the disciples shared everything in common. McEvoy stresses that the monastic community that Augustine created was modelled upon the classical ideals of friendship and that they are in that sense a fulfilment of the classical ideals of Pythagorean theories. Though he does state that the monastic community is the ‘Church in microcosmic form, the enquiry is rather limited in scope. However, he does rightly identify the principle that Augustine sees the Christian Church as a fulfilment of these classical ideals of friendship. The ‘Rule of Augustine is highly illustrative of the particular ideal of being one: ‘The chief motivation for your sharing life together is to live harmoniously in the house and to have one heart and one soul seeking God’.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Acts 4:32, (NRSV). Vg, ‘Multitudinis autem credentium erat cor unum et anima una: nec quisquam eorum quae possidebat, aliquid suum esse dicebat, sed erant illis omnia communia’. Possidius tells us at the founding of the Monastery the principle that: ‘The most important provision was that no one in that community was to have any property of his own, but rather they were to have all things in common’ derived from the ‘Rule’.

⁶⁹ AU reg 3.1.2, (trans, Lawless); ‘primum, propter quod in unum estis congregati, ut unianimes habitetis in domo et sit uobis anima una et cor unum in deum’. (Verheijen, III: 417).

As we have seen, the ecclesial notion of friendship is predicated upon a common ‘house’ as Augustine calls it in the *Rule*, and that house was, within the time of dealing with Donatism, the Church. We also have his theology of friendship which establishes all true friendship with Christ, purchased with the currency of love through the indwelling Spirit that is charity for, ‘true friendship which is not possible unless you bond together those who cleave to one another by the love which is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit’ (AU cf, 4.7). There was also a pastoral benefit to this ecclesiology of friendship on this point.

Donatists, even the violent *circumcellion* had been converted and were standing alongside Catholics in worship. Donatists standing there alongside Catholics had lost their buildings and their wealth. It would have been an immense issue. Nevertheless, the notion of communal friendship here dovetails with Fitzgerald’s observations of drawing their attention to Christ and the need to share in a common future. Donatists in this sense would have been reassured that belonging to the Body of Christ and sharing in the life of the Spirit meant also sharing in what they had not had. Augustine presents this ‘communal’ life of friends as a sharing in material things which flow from the Spiritual unity of the Church. In other words, what they had lost would be offset by a sharing in the material things of the Church as well as its promised future. Catholics may have found this also difficult because it undercuts any notion of inequality. No one could claim that they had gained from others having lost—as friends all had an equal share. Donatists may have lost possessions and Catholics would have to think about sharing if they were to become friends of God. This is another important way in which Augustine’s notion of ecclesial friendship was pastorally expedient.

Augustine exhibits all of these notions within the *Tractatus*. The shared life of the Church was paramount. Living in a chaste and generous fashion was the mark of unity. Berating the division of the past and those who sought their own glory Augustine addresses them:

Evidently, therefore, my brothers and sisters, it does these people no good to preserve virginity, to be continent, to give alms. All these things that are thought of so highly in the Church are no good to them at all, because they are tearing the Unity to shreds, that is, the tunic of charity. What are they doing? Many among them are eloquent, great speakers with torrents of words. Are they speaking angelically? Let them listen to a friend of the bridegroom, being jealous on the bridegroom's behalf, not his own: *If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels but do not have charity, I have become like booming bronze or clashing cymbals* (1 Cor 13:1).⁷⁰

What Augustine presents here is a call to a moral praxis which flows from the Church as a charitable life founded upon Christ. Augustine here sets himself as the model for being a friend of the Church. Nevertheless, the notion of life within the unity of the Church, and a sharing in the life of the Trinity is expressed. Augustine exhibits the central call to the notion of being friends with God through his Church and that a shared communal life flows out of that unity. Augustine embeds this ideal notion of friendship with the life of the Trinity itself as the course and summit of love. Here we see Augustine bring together the notion of friendship with his theology of the Trinity in which all who share this life live in equity. He also embeds this with the notion of friendship in which the indwelling of the members of the Church are participants with a divine life of charity which forges friends for God within Christ's body, the womb of wisdom:

After all, if the spirit of a human being when it clings to God is one spirit, as the apostle says in the clearest terms, The one who clings to God is one spirit (1 Cor 6:17), how much more must the co-equal Son clinging to the Father be together with him one God! Listen to another piece of evidence. You know what a great many there were who believed, when they sold everything they had, and laid the proceeds at the feet of the apostles, so that it might be shared out to each according to his needs (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35); and what does scripture say about that community of saints? They had one soul and one heart in the Lord (*erat illis anima una et cor unum in domino*, Acts 4:32). If charity made one soul out of so many

⁷⁰ AU Jo, 13.15, 256; 'evidenter ergo, fratres mei, nihil prodest istis seruare uirginitatem, habere continentiam, eleemosynas dare; omnia illa quae laudantur in ecclesia, nihil illis prosunt, quia conscindunt unitatem, id est, tunicam illam caritatis. quid faciunt? deserti sunt multi inter illos, magnae linguae, flumina linguarum. numquid angelice loquuntur? audiant amicum sponsi zelantem sponso, non sibi: si linguis hominum loquar et angelorum, caritatem autem non habeam, factus sum ut aeramentum sonans, aut cymbalum tinniens [1 Cor 13,1]. I shall deal more thoroughly with the tropes and rhetorical hermeneutics within the *Tractatus* in Part II.

souls, out of so many hearts made one heart, how much charity must there be between the Father and the Son! Yes, greater than among all those who were of one heart! So then, if because of charity many are of one heart, and because of charity many are of one soul, are you going to say that God the Father and God the Son are two?¹⁸ If they are two gods, then you do not find there the summit of charity. For, if charity is so great that it makes your soul and your friend's soul into one soul here below, how could Father and Son not be one God up there?⁷¹

Growing in Agreement

Because Augustine places such a gravitas upon salvation as belonging to the Church and that it is received as a gift, no one could claim the higher moral ground. Only one thing jeopardised the growth in divine friendship and that was disagreement in praxis and doctrine. Doctrinal praxis lay at the heart of his notion of becoming part of the very fabric of Christ's body. The saints had become 'seasoned timbers' which made up the Church. They had achieved everlasting life and had been revealed as true friends of the bridegroom. The Church was the means by which God drew humanity towards an eternal end: 'For, all human beings born of flesh, what are they but maggots? And from maggots he makes messengers'.⁷² It is through the Church, the 'womb of wisdom' that his friends are born, who are called into Christ to recline with him, within the very bosoms of the Father. However, as we have seen

⁷¹ AU Jo, 14.9, 269-270; 'si enim spiritus hominis quando inhaeret deo unus spiritus est, aperte apostolo dicente: qui adhaeret domino, unus spiritus est [1 Cor 6,17]; quanto magis filius aequalis adhaerens patri simul cum illo unus deus est? audite alterum testimonium. nostis quam multi crediderunt, uando omnia quae habebant, ad pedes apostolorum uendita posuerunt, ut distribueretur unicuique sicut opus erat; et de illa congregatione sanctorum quid dicit scriptura? erat illis anima una et cor unum in domino [Act 4,32]. si caritas de tot animis fecit animam unam, et de tot cordibus fecit cor unum, quanta est caritas inter patrem et filium? maior utique potest esse quam inter illos homines quibus erat cor unum. si ergo multorum fratrum cor unum propter caritatem, et multorum fratrum anima una propter caritatem, deus pater et deus filius, dicturus es quia duo sunt? si duo dii sunt, non est ibi summa caritas. si enim hic tanta caritas est, ut animam tuam et animam amici tui unam animam faciat; quomodo ibi non est unus deus pater et filius?'. (CCSL, 36: 147-8). See also, AU Jo 39.5.

⁷² AU Jo, 1.13 (trans, mine); 'et de uermibus angelos facit'. (CCSL, 36: 7).

‘agreement’ was and remained an essential component to Augustine’s notion of friendship which is carried over into his Catholic faith. This emerges as doctrine which for him governs agreement of things ‘human and divine’.

In a letter to Fabiola, Augustine displays his sense of doctrinal agreement in terms of friendship, in that to fall into heresy or to place one’s self beyond Church discipline meant that friendship with the Church and its members also ruptured. This is because in his understanding of fraternal friendship, to fall beyond doctrinal agreement was a rupture in membership. Augustine begins by saying: ‘I was not silent about what I thought should be said concerning the wicked error of certain person’.⁷³ Augustine is addressing Pelagianism and Pelagius himself though he can barely evoke his name. He goes on to say: ‘Of course I wrote to them, not to Pelagius, but I was replying to his work and words without as yet mentioning his name, since I desired that he be corrected as a friend’.⁷⁴ In other words, Augustine’s notion of friendship based upon the *Ecclesia Catholica* was predicated upon doctrinal ‘agreement’. As we see, he had hoped not to lose him as a friend in Christ, yet ‘disagreement’ on doctrine would certainly mean just that.

As noted in the ‘Introduction’, Stefan Rebenich’s essay, ‘Augustine on Friendship and Orthodoxy’, cements this notion. Focusing upon the letters exchanged by Augustine and Jerome, Rebenich highlights that friendship has a strong doctrinal component. Rebenich focuses upon Augustine’s challenge to Jerome over his ‘Origenist’ interpretation of Galatians 2: 11-14. Augustine required Jerome to: ‘take up genuine and truly Christians severity with

⁷³ AU ep, 19* (WSA, II: 4), 297; ‘in quibus non tacui quod dicendum putavi de nefario errore hominum,’ (CSEL, 88: 91).

⁷⁴ AU ep, 19* (WSA, II: 4), 298; ‘ad eos sane scripsi non ad Pelagium, illius tamen operi uerbisque respondens eius adhuc tacito nomine, quoniam sicut amicum corrigi cupiebam’. (CSEL, 88: 93). On the role of ‘letter exchange’ as a means of correction, see, Ebbeler (2012), 63-99. In the previous chapter in the same work (2762), Ebbeler also provides an important study on the role of Christian friendship as requiring God’s charitable correction of errors.

love to correct and amend that work, and sing, as they say, a *παλινωδιαν*'.⁷⁵ A '*παλινωδιαν*' is a recantation. In many ways, this rebuke from Augustine displays his innate tendency toward conformity. As we have seen, this is what we may call his imperial tendency and as we have noted this finds itself expressed in friendship. Nevertheless, Jerome was not impressed. Jerome frames the conversation in terms of friendship and the cost of agreement: 'All suspicion should be removed from friendship, and one should speak with a friend just as with another self. Some of my close friends and vessels of Christ, of whom there are a great many in Jerusalem'.⁷⁶ Augustine understands what is at stake: 'if I cannot say what I think needs correction in your writings and if you cannot do the same with mine except with a suspicion of hatred and an injury to our friendship, let us cease from this and spare our life and salvation'.⁷⁷ Rebenich identifies that friendship was understood between them as a solidifying element to unity. It was an essential element to the notion of a united society: 'Christian community in late antiquity was based on agreement in *rebus divinis*'.⁷⁸

To deploy friendship for Augustine was a stroke of genius, as it was held before his congregants' inner eye the 'pearl' beyond price. It held before the listeners a vision of true equity; a fellowship of equals bound together in love. It was the place where the past could be eclipsed by the vision of a common future bound within the Church journeying onward to its goal. Remaining within the unity of the Church was the only means of being fruitful in love as the Church was the bride, bought with Christ's bounty. Those within it had to remain within its unity if they were to become *amicus Christi*—*amicus Dei*. The agreement was that they

⁷⁵ AU ep, 40.7 (WSA, II: 1), 151; 'ingenuam et uere christianam cum caritate seueritatem ad illud opus corrigendum atque emendandum et *παλινωδιαν*'. (CSEL, 34: 2,78).

⁷⁶ AU ep, 72.2 (WSA, II: 1), 269; 'de amicitia omnis tollenda suspicio est et sic cum amico quasi cum altero se loquendum. nonnulli familiares mei et uasa Christi'. (CSEL, 34: 2,255).

⁷⁷ AU ep, 73.9 (WSA, II: 1), 277; 'si autem non possum dicere, quid mihi emendandum uideatur in scriptis tuis nec tu in meis nisi cum suspicione inuidiae aut laesione amicitiae, quiescamus ab his et nostrae uitae salutique parcamus'. (CSEL, 34: 2,275).

⁷⁸ Rebenich (2012), 374.

abide by the doctrines of the Church and subject themselves to its discipline. Nevertheless, love was its one fundamental law and those who abided within the Church abided within the love of God. Those who committed themselves to this could become what they now aimed for. From maggots the Church would make them messengers, from enemies and strangers the Church could make them true friends of the bridegroom.

Summary

As is well known, love was the central nub of Augustine's entire theology: 'Love is our life, and life is love—hatred is death'.⁷⁹ Faced with the challenge of dealing with an intractable and embedded schism such as Donatism, the Imperial legislation had brought about a context of immense upheaval in which Augustine sought to capitalise upon and to make out of two communities one *societatis unitate*. Love in this regard takes centre stage and is manifest through the prism of his Pro-Nicene trinitarian theology of the *ecclesia*. Within this theological nexus, Augustine drew the notion of love into the centre ground by conveying the Church as the exclusive earthly entity capable of salvific certainty. Those beyond the bounds of the Church lived for themselves without the Spirit which binds Father and Son. Friendship for Augustine was fraught with mortal foundations which could be shaken. By transposing the notion of participating *anima* into those who participate within God's own soul, the Holy Spirit, who holds all tensions and transience with an immutable and eternal condition. Thus, the Church becomes affixed with a place of God's earthly entity of binding. Those outside of the Church therefore did not participate within the Church which was the Body of Christ on earth which through the Head (Christ) was also in heaven. In short, the Spirit binds its

⁷⁹ AU Ps, 54.7 (trans, mine); 'uita nostra dilectio est; si uita dilectio, mors odium est'. (CCSL, 36: 661).

members to Christ through which its members became friends of God through the Church, the womb of wisdom which give birth to new life and friendship.

Augustine's ecclesial pneumatology was key to his understanding of divine befriending and the means by which its members sojourned within the world on its way to its head, Christ. In a stroke of genius Augustine deployed his law of love in order to cultivate and focus both Catholics and Donatists towards a common aim by dwelling together in Charity, loving each other for God's sake. This was an intensely levelling approach in which to Donatists he reveals the true nature of the Church as non-worldly and eternally oriented and in which Catholics were encouraged to receive and share with Donatists as common members—friends of Christ. By cementing the Trinity as the foundation of the Church, Augustine presents it as the place which its members become ever befriended by God and through which those who look after the interests of the Church are revealed as his saints. The emphasis upon common membership and upon the Spirit who conjugates and cultivates its members in what it means to grow together in Christ. This growing together in common *consentio* subscribing to the Church's teaching and subjecting one's self to its discipline. Divine love could achieve what others had not. The Christians of Africa, though many, could be made one in Christ as his corporate members within his body.

PART II

In this section we now turn in more detail to Augustine's delivery of this vision of ecclesial friendship. Here we trace and outline Augustine's hermeneutical development to grasp more fully his delivery of friendship as recorded within the *Tractatus*. We first explore Augustine's formation in the art of rhetoric and how it came to shape his hermeneutics and homiletic approach to the Bible. From a rhetorical foundation we see how Augustine transforms the text by turning it to expose the hidden meaning obscured by absurdity. From this breakthrough, we see how this forges the way in which Augustine deals with the Scriptures, and in particular, to our enquiry—the *Tractatus*. From this position we see Augustine display his notion of the Church in terms of friendship within the context of the Donatist debate. Augustine is able to deploy figurative methods—tropes, to display within the minds of his listeners the notion that belonging to the one true Church—the Body of Christ leads to friendship with Christ and thus the Trinity. From a foundation of a trinitarian theology of the Church, Augustine is able to weave the text through the traditions of Africa in order to demonstrate the validity of the unity of the Church via the triunity of God who befriends beings through the Body of Christ. Within the *Tractatus*, Augustine utilises the embedded notion of an elevated Christology coupled to John's theology of friendship to call his audience to rest within its boundaries.

In the second chapter of the section we explore in depth Augustine's treatment of John the Baptist, the *amicus sponsi*, as the personification of Catholic Christian discipleship. We see how through the trope of John the Baptist, Augustine builds an argument of authentic ministry and friendship in which the listeners are called to share. This call for the listeners was to become/remain *amicus sponsi* themselves. John the Baptist is primary *trope* in order to display an authentic Christian life; what it truly meant to be a friend of Christ and what the external signs were in the life of the believer. Yet one simple truth underpins it all, you cannot grow in friendship if you are not rooted in his body—the Church.

Chapter 4

Figuration and Friendship: Rhetoric as the *Clavis* of Christian *Amicitia*

nam cum per artem rhetoricam et uera suadeantur et falsa,
quis audeat dicere aduersus mendacium in defensoribus
suis inermem debere consistere ueritatem

de doctrina christiana, 4.3¹

Introduction

In this chapter we shall explore how Augustine's conversion sets him on a course of understanding and expounding upon the Scriptures as a work of divine rhetoric. We see how with the aid of Ambrose, his background in rhetoric came to help him enter the world of Scripture and thus the Church. We will see how Augustine comes to view the Scriptures as a whole and how this dovetails with his rhetorical hermeneutic. The aim within this chapter is to demonstrate and draw out how Augustine utilises the art of rhetoric. We see that with the framework of the North African hermeneutical heritage, how Augustine utilises his rhetorical skills within this context in which he informs and illustrates his theology of friendship to his listeners. This is clear within the *Tractatus*. Building upon the previous chapter, we shall also see that even when friendship is not present within the gospel of John, he imports it from elsewhere to illustrate how friendship fits into the theological vision of his notion of ecclesial unity within the matrix of his trinitarian understanding of the body of Christ in relation to those beyond its bounds and those who are bound within.

Through Augustine's sermon discourse within the *Tractatus*, he deploys his rhetorical trade within the living tradition of the North African Donatist schism. The way he does this is

¹ 'Rhetoric, after all, being the art of persuading people to accept something, whether it is true or false, would anyone dare to maintain that truth should stand there without any weapons in the hands of its defenders against falsehood'. (WSA, IV: 2.3). 207.

through the strategy of accommodation, through the arrangement of the material (texts) and style (words). We also see the common praxis of the legitimate Orator in which the will of Christ is made known through an authorised interpreter, ‘sacred orator’. Augustine the Bishop presents himself as the authority through which Christ speaks to his body—the Church. This notion of authorised Oratory is transposed from his previous career within the elite Imperial court, into the legitimate Catholic ecclesial office of Bishop.² We have seen how Augustine demonstrates that the Church as Christ’s body becomes the exclusive dwelling place of God, who bestows on its members the gift of the Spirit, which binds all in all and offers the bonds of divine friendship to his creatures. In this chapter the main aim is to highlight how through the art of rhetoric and within the matrix of his ecclesiology how Augustine, through his office of Bishop (ecclesial orator) he contextualises the Scripture through the prism of North African tradition and current challenges of Donatism. Within this nexus, which is sieved through the gospel of John, Augustine delineates and denucleates his notion of Christian friendship as contingent upon *Ecclesia*. Let us first begin with where Augustine himself began.

Augustine’s Figurative Formation

In terms of describing anything from the late classical period we are plagued by our modern conceptual lenses which informs our understanding of ancient labels. These inherited optics, whether consciously, or unconsciously recognised, hinders our understanding of descriptive academic disciplines relating to their formative classical roots. For us today, the disciplines of science, theology and philosophy are good examples of the inherent optics through which the division of disciplines are parsed. We must be reminded that this modern lens through which we retrospectively gaze backwards, must be re-calibrated or at least acknowledged. Contemporary

² See ‘Introduction’, n27.

categories of academic disciplines would have been unrecognisable to the ancient world. The ancient notions of philosophy and theology are not to be seen as areas of thought drastically or distinctly different from one another. Augustine would make the point himself: 'there is not one thing called philosophy, that is devotion to wisdom, and another called religion'.³ Notable contemporary specialists have reminded us by stressing the same point:

Books sometimes appear with titles like *The Philosophy of Augustine* or *Augustine's Philosophy of Whatever?* So titled they may unintentionally mislead, suggesting as they do that Augustine's range of intellectual concerns was limited to those of a typical member of an Anglo-American philosophy department - though in his view philosophy is not a game or a job but a way of life (*Against the Sceptics* 2.2.5). They may also suggest that a book about Augustine's philosophy would have little to say about what we would style theology. A book entitled *The Theology of Augustine*, on the other hand, would risk being treated as pabulum for the cleric or para-cleric, hence of no interest to anyone else; some would assume that it had nothing to do with argument, or even with reason. In any case, to call Augustine a philosopher rather than a theologian is not merely to admit a distinction which he would not have accepted; it is to propose a distinction which he did not know.⁴

It has been argued that Augustine's development of understanding and acceptance of the Scriptures came about as the result of Augustine's conversion to neo-platonism.⁵ On one level this is an argument with considerable virtue. It is beyond question that Augustine's adoption of neo-platonic thought helped him shed the veil of Manichaean dualism and help pave the way forward to a new and serious appraisal of the Christian Scriptures and of their true possession place within the Church. His introduction to Neoplatonism, coupled with the Oratory of Ambrose opened the

³ AU rel, 8 (WSA, I: 8), 34-5; 'non aliam esse philosophiam, id est sapientiae studium, et aliam religionem'. (CCSL, 32: 193).

⁴ Rist (1994), 5.

⁵ The literature on this is vast. However, Colin Starnes essay (1992), is an excellent illustration of how in the past the preoccupation of ascribing such a great emphasis upon Neoplatonism as the primary vehicle of Augustine's conversion, has overshadowed and veiled Augustine's own account of his conversion. Despite the fact that Starnes essay is an exploration of his conversion to Catholicity and the title of the book *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian*, there is no mention of Augustine as a 'Rhetor'. The essay itself has an overriding concern, like the book itself, with how Platonism fits into the process of Augustine's conversion. A notable absence of interests in the role of Rhetoric and its nuanced distinction from philosophy is illustrative of this narrowness.

gate through which Augustine could enter into the rich and fertile pastures of the Bible. This to us is a powerful and seemingly obvious approach. Nevertheless, here we may slip into the trap of seeing ‘philosophical’ worldviews, as an external lens that Augustine changes out for another. This also can blind us to the obvious fact that Augustine was not primarily a philosopher—he was a Rhetor.⁶

A contemporary example of this is the argument that has become known as the ‘two Augustine’s theory’.⁷ In terms of parsing Augustine into an ancient category, it is worth taking a brief excursion to explain the roots of the division of philosophy from rhetoric in Augustine’s own day. In the ancient world the splintering of rhetoric from the academy can be traced back to Socrates.⁸ The fundamental difference between them being that rhetoricians thought words *did* something, philosophers *didn’t*. If we were to apply a ridged modern definition to Augustine, he would always be seen as a Rhetor if anything, as words to him always conveyed things (*res*) (see below). Rhetors largely lived out their lives in philosophy within a public sphere. Not all groups within the liberal arts did, as words to some did not convey ideas in the same way Rhetors thought. Yet, all this seems to us now blindingly obvious—we had overlooked this aspect of Augustine’s life. That first and foremost he was a Rhetor, a philosopher of words. Michael Cameron’s work has sharpened and highlighted the need to appreciate Augustine’s rhetorical furniture of his mental landscape.⁹ To see how Augustine the Rhetor was hidden in plain sight and that in viewing

⁶ Here I want to stress the point made by Andrew Riggsby that there is a distinction between ‘Rhetoric’ as essentially the theoretical and linguistic theories, ‘instructional, evaluative, taxonomic’ that informs the aims and the outcomes of ‘Oratory’ which is the execution of public speaking and persuasion. See Riggsby (2010), 389.

⁷ See, Harrison (2006), 3-19.

⁸ See, May and Wisse (2001), ‘Introduction’ to *de Oratore*, in, Cicero: *On the Ideal Orator*, 20-26; Cameron, (2012b), 35 (see below).

⁹ I am indebted to, and somewhat parasitic of the work of Eden (1997) in which she exposes the cross-fertilisation between classical schools of rhetoric and the Christian hermeneutical tradition with a particular focus upon Basil the Great and Augustine’s within the patristic period. Michael Cameron builds upon Eden’s work, to demonstrate how

Augustine through his training and skill as a teacher of rhetoric, is the proper setting to see how he approaches and becomes a Catholic Christian on his terms. Cameron demonstrates that for Augustine to be able to re-calibrate his vision of Christianity—his life in rhetoric is the proper place from which to proceed.

Seeing Augustine through the lens of a Rhetor gives us a firm foundation on which to observe how he motions towards seeing the Bible, and its connection with the *Ecclesia* as worthy of his attention. This motioning of the heart towards the Church ultimately delivers him at the understanding that the Scriptures are a divinely arranged collection of writings (*sacrum scripta*). Primarily, as we shall see, that it was not a life in philosophy that unlocked the doors of his *animus* or remove the veil that clothed the Scriptures from his mind—it was Ambrose’s Ciceronian sermonic arrangement. The reason Augustine rejected the Scripture was not that it was unphilosophical but that it was un-Ciceronian.¹⁰ Cameron argues persuasively that it is the arrangement of Ambrose’s discourse that provides the *clavis* to unlocking the Bible and thus opens up his entry into the *Ecclesia*. For Augustine, authoritative and valid understanding of Scripture could only be found within the body of the Church: ‘I would not believe in the Gospel had I not been moved by the authority of the Catholic Church.’¹¹ Yet, initially he had to step towards humility from supercilious intellectual pride, incrementally moving forward to viewing the Scriptures as worthy of his time and efforts.¹² Ambrose shows him how the key which he already possessed could unlock that which had remained sealed. The Scriptures were the *clavis* (key) to

Augustine the Rhetor utilises his training to see the entirety of Scripture as a work of divine rhetoric. Cameron also displays how this appropriation of rhetoric for Augustine is rooted in his own conversion process. The list of Works that I am particularly indebted to are Cameron (1999); (2005); (2007); (2010); (2012a); (2012b).

¹⁰ Cameron, (2010), 57.

¹¹ AU fu, (trans, mine); ‘ego uero euangelio non crederem, nisi me catholicae ecclesiae conuinceret auctoritas’, (CSEL, 25: 1.197).

¹² See Chapter 6 for a fuller discussion of the role of *humilitas* and *superbia* as external signifiers of friendship in relation to unseen internal spiritual conditions.

Catholic Christianity—yet it was Cicero who was provided the key to it all. In entering the Church, he would find fertile ground for his training as a Rhetor, including friendship. Nevertheless, the sin of pride for Augustine veiled the treasures of the Scripture from his inward eyes:

I therefore decided to give attention to the holy scriptures and to find out what they were like. And this is what met me: something neither open to the proud nor laid bare to mere children; a text lowly to the beginner but, on further reading, of mountainous difficulty and enveloped in mysteries. I was not in any state to be able to enter into that, or to bow my head to climb its steps. What I am now saying did not then enter my mind when I gave my attention to the scripture. It seemed to me unworthy (*indigna*) in comparison with the dignity (*dignitati*) of Cicero. My inflated conceit shunned the Bible's restraint, and my gaze never penetrated to its inwardness. Yet the Bible was composed in such a way that as beginners mature, its meaning grows with them. I disdained to be a little beginner. Puffed up with pride, I considered myself a mature adult.¹³

In Augustine's approach to Scripture we find a thinker plagued by the desire to understand. Yet, Augustine will not understand that which he does not love, and love what he does not understand. It is clear from his life prior to his conversion (386), understanding the Scriptures was what he had failed to do. He certainly failed to love the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament. Through his Ciceronian rhetorical training combined with a Manichean prism, the Scriptures were simply seen as, 'unworthy' (*indigna*), and summarily dismissed as inferior to secular literature. It is not without a sense of irony that he first chose Cicero over Scripture only to have Scripture in the end by Cicero's influence through his own writings. Nevertheless, as Cameron aphoristically summarises Augustine's recollection: 'In retrospect it sounds like a precocious youth's typically sophomoric *veni, vidi, vici*: he read, he judged, he shunned'.¹⁴ For a man of such eloquence and

¹³ AU cf, 3:9, 40; 'itaque institui animum intendere in scripturas sanctas et uidere, quales essent. et ecce uideo rem non compertam superbis neque nudatam pueris, sed incessu humilem, successu excelsam et uelatam mysteriis, et non eram ego talis, ut intrare in eam possem aut inclinare ceruicem ad eius gressus. non enim sicut modo loquor, ita sensi, cum attendi ad illam scripturam, sed uisa est mihi indigna, quam Tullianae dignitati compararem. tumor enim meus refugiebat modum eius et acies mea non penetrabat interiora eius. uerum autem illa erat, quae cresceret cum paruulis, sed ego dedignabar esse paruulus et turgidus fastu mihi grandis uidebar. (CCSL, 27: 31).

¹⁴ Cameron, (2010), 57.

learning, they were beneath him.¹⁵ Yet it was during listening to Ambrose that Augustine began to see and understand how Ambrose turns the texts, arranging it to reveal new and hidden dimensions of its meaning. It was through the art of rhetoric that the Bible was opened for understanding:

I was not interested in learning what he (Ambrose) was talking about. My ears were only for his rhetorical technique...together with the words which I was enjoying, the subject matter, in which I was unconcerned, came to make an entry into my mind. I could not separate them.¹⁶

Through the rhetorical and figurative approach to Scripture, Ambrose invites Augustine to enter into the Scriptures with Cicero as his guide. Increasingly through the powers of Ambrose's words, he begins to newly appreciate the Scripture as thoroughly Ciceronian, even surpassing him. In short, Ambrose shows Augustine, 'what he already knew' concerning Cicero, and to see what he had not seen. This is how Augustine's Ciceronian rhetorical training enables him to accommodate sacred *scriptum*, 'that which is written' through the living voice of the Orator. In Ambrose, the Scriptures came alive to him and he understood the role of Ambrose the preacher in terms of rhetoric. It also allowed him to imbibe the divine *Verbum* of Scripture through the words of Ambrose. Through Ambrose's words, Augustine received the Word (we shall deal with this in the following chapter more thoroughly). This is the very precipice of his figurative breakthrough. Augustine began to understand that the Scriptures themselves were a work of rhetoric of the finest order: 'The authority of the Bible seemed the more to be venerated and worthier of a holy faith on the grounds that it was open to everyone to read, while keeping the

¹⁵ Augustine seems to follow Cicero's high value on training and education rather than natural ability. See, Cicero, *De or.* 1:5, 'quod ego prudentissimorum hominum artibus eloquentiam contineri statuam'. (LCL, 348: 6-7).

¹⁶ AU cf, 5.24, 88; 'cum enim non satagerem discere quae dicebat, sed tantum quemadmodum dicebat audire - ea mihi quippe iam desperanti ad te uiam patere homini inanis cura remanserat - ueniebant in animum meum simul cum uerbis, quae diligebam, res etiam, quas neglegebam; neque enim ea dirimere poteram'. (CCSL, 27: 71). Conybeare (2017), concerning this point makes the salient observation that with the *verba* the *res* being joined together, the words (*verba*) become the saline solution for the substance of the thing (*res*) behind its meaning. This is also a clear example also of Augustine's view that words *did things*, as a Rhetor this is what we expect to see. 303.

dignity of its secret meaning for a profounder interpretation'.¹⁷ Here is the locus of how Augustine envisions the Scriptures as a work of rhetoric: 'its rough style was a rhetorical strategy of camouflage that repelled scoffers even while it welcomed seekers'.¹⁸ In other words, it guarded its treasure from prideful minds in plain sight. It also was filled with depth that offered something to everyone from the simple to the trained intelligentsia. It was a work of *scriptum* worthy to be acclaimed as *sanctus* and it was through Cicero's rhetorical training that he arrives there. Augustine never found the name of Christ in Cicero's books (*Conf*, 3:8), yet, he did find Christ through Cicero.

Augustine in his own conversion found in the pattern of conversion itself, that the preacher was a sacred Orator. As a bishop (like Ambrose) he would see this office as a sacred mirror of his secular counterparts, Rhetors. Yet, the difference between them would be a matter of truth. Rhetors used their art as a means of persuading listeners in either truth or lies. Augustine would go from being an elite secular Orator to a sacred one. Averil Cameron commenting upon the transitional elements of elite societal structure and the stratification of the Church says: 'the traditional culture is challenged by an alternative, Christian one; and an alternative, institutionalized elite had come into being in the persons of Christian bishops'.¹⁹

Rhetoric as the *Clavis* of *Interpretatio Scriptum*

Kathy Eden's now influential work, *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical tradition* has been instrumental in this new focus of inquiry upon Augustine's interpretation of Scripture. She outlines the central nub of the Ciceronian rhetorical method of *aequitas* 'equity', the notion of 'fitted-ness'

¹⁷ AU cf, 6.8, 96; 'ad sacramentorum altitudinem referebam eoque mihi illa uenerabilior et sacrosancta fide dignior apparebat auctoritas, quo et omnibus ad legendum esset in promptu et secreti sui dignitatem in intellectu profundiore seruaret. (CCSL, 27: 78).

¹⁸ Cameron, (2010), 58.

¹⁹ Cameron (1991), 30.

or ‘accommodation’. This is deeply rooted in Augustine’s approach to Scripture as ‘reading well as a journey home’.²⁰ Eden argues that the idea of a ‘journey’ is a transferable accommodative power Augustine deploys within a Christological substratum, we see this in his figurative displays within the *Tractatus* (see below). Augustine displays Christ as the author of this accommodative act. Christ accommodates himself for our journey home. Cameron notes, that what happened to him in Milan was a kind of homecoming.²¹ This idea of *aequitas* is something Augustine would have learned through his training. The notion of accommodation of a dead letter into a living tradition is visible in Augustine’s approach to Scripture as we will see. The tractates clearly display this. The aim of this rhetorical method was to make alive the will, ‘*voluntas*’, or intent of the author. Augustine like Cicero, imagined the dead author speaking afresh through the Orator.²² Through the hermeneutical interplay *scriptum/voluntas* the idea of ‘equity’ as a tool of arbitration in the process of *interpretatio scripti*: ‘the dead letter to a living tradition of justice’.²³ It is within the licence of the Orator, to weave through the words in a process of journeying through the author’s *scriptum* in order to display the authors intended *voluntas*. To speak afresh through one’s own words. As Eden notes, this is particularly important in dealing with obscure texts where the literal meanings are illusive. This method of ‘equity’ gives licence to ‘authorised interpreters to make corrections to a written law’.²⁴ We see this here in the *Confessions*:

I also did not know that true inward justice which judges not by custom but by the most righteous law of almighty God. By this law the moral customs of different regions and periods were adapted to their places and times, while that law itself remains unaltered everywhere and always.²⁵

²⁰ Eden (1997), 53.

²¹ Cameron (2010), 59.

²² Cicero, *Inv.* 2. 48:139.

²³ See, Cicero, *De or.* 1.31:140; 2. 26:110.

²⁴ Cameron, (2010), 59; Eden, (1997), 17.

²⁵ AU cf, 3:13, 44; ‘et non noueram iustitiam ueram interiore non ex consuetudine iudicantem, sed ex lege rectissima dei omnipotentis, qua formarentur mores regionum et dierum pro regionibus et diebus, cum ipsa ubique ac semper esset’. (CCSL, 27: 33).

Here, Augustine is highlighting the Ciceronian method of ‘equity’, and contextualising that which is unalterable through the local moral and cultural framework. It is through the Ciceronian approach of equity, that the Scriptures, through Ambrose, were able to cut through to Augustine, enabling him to enter into a new level of understanding and love. To learn to love that which had been hidden and obscured, rendering worthy what he had deemed unworthy. This method of rhetoric forms the framework of Augustine’s own hermeneutic of love through the praxis of *interpretation scripti*, and the Rhetorical pursuit of *aequitas*, to accommodate them to the audience. Ambrose, Scriptural notion ‘letter’ vs ‘Spirit’ (2 Cor. 3: 6) was able to bridge that gap within the rhetorical principal of *scriptum/voluntas* as a Scriptural notion of letter/spirit. This move ‘accommodated’ the Scripture to Augustine’s mental framework in order that he may journey through the veil towards understanding:

I was delighted to hear Ambrose in his sermons to the people saying, as if he were most carefully enunciating a principle of exegesis: ‘The letter kills, the spirit gives life’ (2 Cor. 3:6). Those texts which, taken literally, seemed to contain perverse teaching he would expound spiritually, removing the mystical veil.²⁶

Through Ambrose’s accommodation of Scripture imbibed through Augustine’s Rhetorical prism, he was able to see and understand the Scriptures, not as a primitive set of naive narratives fraught with all manner of moral absurdities, but rather as a single work of a divine authorship that could be accommodated to the audience as a living text. It is through this process of recalibration, that Augustine re-embraces his rhetorical training, not for Emperor but for a friend, Christ the divine befriender. In the garden attached to his residence in Milan, listening to the chanting of a child, *tolle lege*, Augustine held in his hands the words of the divine Word and surrendered to the grace of his new Master and *Magistro*.

²⁶ AU cf, 6:6, 94; ‘et tamquam regulam diligentissime commendaret, saepe in popularibus sermonibus suis dicentem Ambrosium laetus audiebam: littera occidit, spiritus autem uiuificat [2 Cor 3,6], cum ea, quae ad litteram peruersitatem docere uidebantur, remoto mystico uelamento spiritaliter aperiret’. (CCSL, 27: 77).

Augustine the Rhetor aimed for the heights of friendship, worldly friendship: ‘Can we hope for any higher office in the palace than to be Friends of the Emperor?’²⁷ Yet having reached the dizzying heights of office in the service of the Emperor, with his new found faith he turned his trade towards a new and eternal friend whose authority and Empire were bounded by nothing except the power of divine love: ‘true friendship which is not possible unless you bond together those who cleave to one another by the love which ‘is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us’ (Rom. 5: 5)’.²⁸ Ambrose had led Augustine to the gates of the Master, in the garden, Augustine discovered what it was to ‘knock’ and enter in. At the beginning of the story of Augustine’s journey into Christ, Ambrose through his preaching and skill, demonstrates to Augustine how the Ciceronian method finds its true home in the Scriptures, particularly in the office of a preacher, a Bishop. But why was it such an arduous journey from Cicero to Christ we might ask?

In the ancient manner of texts, the Scriptures of Christianity fell outside the ancient norms of grammar and syntactical style. Cultivated men who had encountered the Scriptures compared them to the ancient literature of the day and found them obscure and clumsy. Gerald Bruns draws attention to this: ‘the Holy Scriptures constituted an eminent but profoundly abnormal text. Against the textual norms of Hellenic and Roman culture, the Scriptures make their appearance as a practically unreadable book—a barbarous text.’²⁹ This is because the Scriptures in their composition (*dispositio*) and style (*elocutio*) fail to fit into the normal criteria of standard texts. They are a set of writings that are full of ‘stumbling block’ *skandala*. In other words, the texts require a method of ‘standardisation’, non-more so to the ancient Orator than the Scriptures. A way of

²⁷ AU cf, 8:15, 143; ‘maiorne esse poterit spes nostra in palatio, quam ut amici imperatoris simus?’, (CCSL, 27: 122-123).

²⁸ AU cf, 4:7, 56; ‘uera amicitia, quia non est uera, nisi cum eam tu agglutinas inter haerentes tibi caritate diffusa in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis [Rm 5,5]’. (CCSL, 27: 43).

²⁹ Bruns (1984), 147-8.

‘accommodating’ them into the substructure of ancient grammar and syntax making them palatable for the ancient ear was to apply the norms of rhetoric, to seek the *voluntas* through the accommodative method. A favoured way of doing this, was through the development of figuration. This became a common way of rhetorical hermeneutical praxis by way of standardisation, to accommodating it to a living tradition of justice through the twin strategy of arrangement (*dispositio*) and style (*elocutio*). The introduction of figuration, standardises or normalises the text in a way through which the obscurity of Scripture’s *voluntas* could be revealed and understood. This may jar us as to the appropriation of the text and the historical violence this may wreak upon it. However, the spiritualising of the text to ancient minds was a perfectly legitimate way of understanding. Both historical and prophetic exegetical notions of figuration collide within this nexus of rhetorical hermeneutic.³⁰ The ancient concern was to focus upon understanding and truth, the road by which you arrived there was a secondary concern. Once Augustine would arrive within the world of Scripture, he would be able to see that at the heart of Jesus ministry, was a series of truth bearing stories which were the primary method of understanding.³¹

In his dealing with the theme of friendship in his tractates on John, we see Augustine say little about friendship without the figurative method, much of this is displayed through a *trope*. Tropes within the *Tractatus*, were a figure or object whose meaning was inculcated with his theological vision of ecclesial unity. Friendship is displayed and deployed as a tool in his theological vision of ecclesial dwelling as the central ornamentation of his hermeneutic of friendship. Augustine is, in this regard indebted to the school of Cicero, as the notion of figuration becomes

³⁰ See, Cameron, (1999).

³¹ Averil Cameron (1991) makes the salient point that figuration is an imbedded element with the scriptural texts that aided both outsiders and Christians themselves to enter into the strangeness of text. She asserts that Christians themselves wrestled to understand, particularly the Old Testaments in light of the new. In essence, the Rhetorical praxis of accommodation was essential not only for non-believers but also for believers themselves. 65.

the dominate method of standardisation which he uniquely develops into a system of rhetoric. The figurative method for Augustine is the predominate rhetorical strategy of accommodation in order to display the truth of Christ afresh within the context of ecclesial friendship. As Bruns states: ‘in the case of Augustine, who was the first major thinker to regard the scriptures generically as a work of rhetoric, that is, as a work of figural eloquence with designs upon its audience’.³² Augustine is able to transform the ‘barbarous text’, an *indigna* text into a *Tullianae dignitati*. This veiled truth forms the basis of Augustine’s notion of the Scriptures as a work of rhetoric as they cater for the seeker whilst the cloak of its obscurity prevents scoffers from believing.

The classical framework of Ciceronian rhetorical structure concerning *aequitas* is largely based upon five elements laid out by Quintilian.³³ 1) *inventio*, to arrange and discover the elements of the argument; 2) *dispositio*, arrangement of the material; 3) *elocutio*, the style, or ‘fitted-ness’ of speech; 4) *memoria*, the process of inwardly digesting the material in order to make it one’s own; 5) *actio*, the delivery of the discourse. These five elements of speech construction form the nexus of the art of rhetoric within the Ciceronian method of accommodating a speech not only to the audience but to the Orator. Cameron draws attention to the fact this Ciceronian method, *dispositio*,³⁴ is particularly singled out for its importance due to its ‘presupposition of the whole into which the parts fit’.³⁵ Nevertheless, the art of *decorum*, a form of *elocutio* governed the

³² Bruns, (1984), 148.

³³ Quintilian, *The Orator’s Education* [*Inst.*] 3:3, ‘The system of oratory, as a whole, according to most authorities, and the best of them, consists of five parts: Invention (*inventio*), Disposition (*dispositio*), Elocution (*elocutio*), Memory (*memoria*), and Delivery (*actio*) or Performance (both terms are in use). Every utterance, at any rate everyone by which some meaning is expressed, must have both content and words. If it is brief and limited to a single sentence, it may need nothing else; but longer speeches do require more. For it is not only what we say and how we say it that matters, but also in what sequence: Disposition (*dispositio*) is therefore essential.’ (LCL, 125: 22-23).

³⁴ Quintilian sometime refers to this sometimes as also as ‘*oeconomia*’ a form of *dispositio*, sometime as ‘*oeconomia dispositio*’ which Quintilian refers to as ‘The most potent’ form of *dispositio*. See *Inst.* 1:8.

³⁵ Cameron, (2010), 62; See also, AU do, 2:23 (WSA, I: 11), n52, 147.

‘appropriateness’ of the arrangement of the sermons for the audience.³⁶ When coming to explore the theme of friendship within the *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus*, this becomes extremely important for Augustine’s hermeneutic of friendship to reveal itself through the accommodative praxis of the *Interpretatio scriptum*. Within the *dispositio* of *aequitas*, tropes form the locus as the integral function of being able to display the whole thrust of the polemic within itself. *Decorum* on the other hand governs the appropriation of historical and contextual ‘fitted-ness’ of the speech’s arrangement. Therefore, the twin strategies of arrangement, *dispositio* and *decorum* inform the utilisation of the mental image which is the embodiment of the truth displaying the figure (*figura*) as both appropriate and representative of the whole. A particularly powerful expression of figuration is the *tropus synecdoche* (συνεκδοχή),³⁷ that is an ornamental image presented before the mind that condenses and clarifies the whole by a process of transferable truth that has designs upon its audience to emotionally move the listeners into a new understanding of God’s will and love.

Augustine’s figurative expositions are clearly a favoured method of ornamental *Interpretatio scriptum* with a long pedigree in both the secular and sacred spheres. Philosophical realignments of a neo-platonic flavour were able to gain traction after his Ciceronian breakthrough. Rhetoric coupled with the immaterial notions of God in relation to creation become imbedded in a lifelong love of *communicatio*. All of this comes into view clearly in Augustine’s figurative approaches to Scripture, particularly in the rhetorical strategy of accommodating a text through the arrangement of the sermonic discourse which Augustine considers as a collaboration with Christ as an

³⁶ See, Cameron (2010) 60-62; Riggsby (2010) states that *decorum* was essentially the principle of ‘appropriateness’. We shall see how Augustine by building upon the North African tradition of ecclesial tropes and presenting them through the text of John becomes a dominant rhetorical strategy in the way he utilises not only the will of Scripture but of the North African tradition.

³⁷ L&S, ‘a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole’, 1829; Cicero, *ad Herennium*, [*Rhetorica ad Herennium*] 4.33.44, trans, H. Caplan, ‘Synecdoche occurs when the whole is known from a small part or a part from the whole.’. (LCL, 403. 340-341), (attributed to Cicero). On the relationship between tropes and synecdoche see, Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.6.28

appointed and authorised interpreter. In this sense, Scripture and the history of salvation echo wisdom's arrangement of all things (Wis. 8:1).³⁸ Explaining the spiritual interplay between the writer, preacher and divine wisdom (Christ) Augustine states:

And in those passages where it can perhaps be detected by the learned, such things are being said that the words they are said with seem to spring spontaneously from the subject matter, rather than to be contributed by the writer, so that you could almost imagine wisdom stepping out from her own house, that is from the breast of the wise man, followed by eloquence as her inseparable, even if uninvited, lady in waiting.³⁹

Augustine outlines the dynamics of divine discourse, a performative act that involves the preacher as a conduit, a messenger through which the words are accommodated within the re-immersion of the Scripture through the mediation of Christ. The deployment of the *trope* embodies this dynamic of the discourse. It forms the locus of the sermonic truth bearing image through which the hearer is not just invited to assent but also to act. Quintilian in *Institutio Oratoria* highlights the point:

Tropes, which are the main ornaments not only of poetry but also of oratory, and both kinds of Schemata—that is to say, Figures of Speech (*lexeos*) and of Thought

³⁸ I want to make here the point that beneath this approach is a firm Christological substructure. For just as the arrangement of the Scriptures are seen by Augustine as an act of divine arrangement by wisdom (Christ) and is displayed with the gospel of John as the *Verbum* (*Logos*) as divine *decorum*, it is fundamentally displayed in flesh. This relationship between *dispositio/oeconomia* and *elocutio /decorum* is mirrored by the Scriptures and the incarnation of the *Verbum*. See, Cameron, (2010), 62-67

³⁹ AU do, 4:10 (WSA, I: 11), 212; 'et in quibus forte locis agnoscitur a doctis, tales res dicuntur, ut uerba, quibus dicuntur, non a dicente adhibita sed ipsis rebus uelut sponte subiuncta uideantur, quasi sapientiam de domo sua, id est pectore sapientis, intellegas procedere, et tamquam inseparabilem famulam etiam non uocatam sequi eloquentiam. (Simonetti, 266).

(*dianoëas*) as they are called;⁴⁰ these, like the Tropes, I postpone till I come to deal with the ornaments of style⁴¹

In essence the process of accommodating the holy Scriptures into the context of life within Augustine's day is through the principle of *dispositio* (The whole in part and part in whole of the arrangement) and *decorum* (the fitted-ness of the arrangement), which finds its locus in the truth bearing *figura*—the *trope*. This is done within the dynamics of divine *communicatio*, through which the writer of Scripture, preacher and audience are interlockers within a sacramental encounter with Christ within his body, the place of encounter: 'For Christ is not in the head and the body but is in both body and head'.⁴² Here Augustine fully immersed into an incarnational paradigm⁴³ of preaching. Within this theological matrix the Orator is a divinely sanctioned (Augustine transfers the principal of an authorised person within the rhetorical statues into his episcopal chair) incarnational act of imparting the truths through the mystery of participation. As Michael Scanlon poetically phrases this dynamic of incarnational preaching as: 'language ordained toward action'.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Cicero distinguishes between figures of speech, the words, and thought which embodies it which resonates with his theology of signs. However, he does state the thing signified is not changed by the words used. He states: 'between figures of thought and figures of speech there is this difference, that a figure of speech disappears if you change the words, while the figure of a thought remains no matter what words you choose to employ', *de Oratore*, 3:201, (2001)

⁴¹ Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.8:16-17, 'Enimvero iam maiore cura doceat tropos omnes, quibus praecipue non poema modo sed etiam oratio ornatur, schemata utraque, id est figuras, quaeque lexeos quaeque dianoëas vocantur: quorum ego sicut troporum tractatum in eum locum differo quo mihi de ornatu orationis dicendum erit', in, LCL, 124

⁴² AU Jo, 28.1, (trans-mine); 'non enim Christus in capite et non in corpore, sed Christus totus in capite et in corpore', (CCSL, 36: 277)

⁴³ As Cameron notes, (1999), Augustine move through a developing set of "paradigms", beginning with a "materialist" prism towards an advanced Christological, "incarnational" paradigm through which "sign" are understood a "conjunctive" rather than "disjunctive" in their ontological content. This is translated into an exegetical notion of figurative representation having spiritual content rather than a merely illustrative or instructive quality.

⁴⁴ Scanlon (1999), 37-50.

The deployment of *trope(s)* as an ornamental *figura(e)* that displays within the mind and memory of the listener the very words of the preacher was one of the most powerful ways Rhetor's could enter the heart of the hearer. It was a primary mode of speaking: 'dwelling on a single point makes a very strong impression, as do lucid expositions and lay things almost before people's eyes, as if they are actually taking place'.⁴⁵ Augustine was well aware of the power of internalisation of thought as a spirituality of inverting the mind back upon itself in order to seek a clearer vision of God who made it. This he learned during his 'avocation' in the writings of Plotinus and Porphyry which coincided with his Ambrosian breakthrough. In the ancient world, sight was understood as the primary value of sense perception. Sense was treated with suspicion. Nevertheless, the seeing of God was an intellectual 'seeing' and this compliments the notion of figurative tropes, as they display a seeing within the inner eyes. As Harrison notes: 'seeing God was a matter of intellectual 'vision' rather than physical vision is beyond question: it was universally held that God was better known by the mind than the senses'.⁴⁶

The *trope*, nevertheless, embodied the arrangement of accommodative speech, imbedded the point as to capture the entire discourse in a single image whereby the soul would be led towards the divine truth of indwelling love--friendship. This truth of which Augustine now stands upon within the *Ecclesia Catholica* becomes the bedrock of Augustine's notion of friendship as being bound within the unity of the Church. By the time Augustine is writing the *Tractatus*, particularly the first sixteen, he had been a Bishop for nearly ten years and was fully saturated within Biblical and doctrinal semantics, as well as the local ecclesial context through which *decorum* became an imperative tool of sermonic stylistic persuasion. Before we return to how Augustine brings his background in rhetorical strategies to bear on his vision of ecclesial friendship, we must take a brief excursion. This is to outline historic and background of the North African context. For

⁴⁵ Cicero, *De or.* 3: 202; Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.1:27

⁴⁶ Harrison (2013), 30.

elocutio/decorum requires this historical context in order to effectively utilise correctly the figurative hermeneutics whilst *dispositio/oeconomia* governs the whole through which the *trope* as a part embodies the whole. Upon the *trope*, these two strategies of *aequitas* merge. However, we must first examine the common features of North African hermeneutical figurative displays, with a particular focus upon the unity of the Church.

North Africa and the Tradition of the Trope

The use of Rhetorical ornamentation of figurative speech has, by the time of Augustine's episcopacy, had a long and distinguished pedigree. The history of figuration and of a general spiritualising of Scripture texts was born in Eastern North African.⁴⁷ This history often has a regional dynamic. Augustine is not the first from an African background to come from a noble class of well-healed secular intellectuals. In the west this tradition was imbibed and influenced by the Latin Rhetorical tradition. Indeed, the third century saw a significant influx of pious men and women from noble families and officials with considerable kudos within the secular environment. Indeed, almost all of Augustine's prominent figures of influence came from this sphere. Augustine comes from a long- and well-established list of those who benefited from this tradition. Marius Victorinus, Lactantius, Arnobius, Cyprian (who is extensively discussed in what follows), Tertullian, who benefited from the great teachers Quintilian, and Cicero (as Italian forefather). As

⁴⁷ Philo sets a pattern of hermeneutics which has an indelible effect upon the relationship between the Scriptures and the Judaeo-Christian world thereafter. For example, Philo pioneers a figurative, spiritualising of the Scriptures as a way of mining them for meaning beyond the immediacy of what is presented. He insists: 'We must make up our minds that all such language is figurative and involves deeper meanings' (Philo, *Det.* 167, 312-313). This pattern of approach pours through into the Christian world through Origen the great Christ exegete. This is well known within the history of theology. However, both Philo and Origen place this paradigm shift in reading and interpreting Scripture within an African context of which Augustine and his interlocutors are its inheritors. For an overview of Philo and his approach, see, Daniélou (2014). For the most current monograph on Origen and the Scriptures, see, Martens (2012).

we have seen, the classically educated nobles in the time of Augustine pervaded the high offices of ecclesial life and had done for some time. This in turn helped shape the nature of his own discourse in dealing with heretics and schismatic alike in the formation of the Latin Church's identity. The writings of which that survived were almost exclusively from the educated elites. In western Africa, none more so than Tertullian and Cyprian. The history of the tradition of the use of ornamental tropes had long been employed in writings that dealt with issues confronting the Church. Nevertheless, with the issues of ecclesial unity, certain images were often deployed as embodied argumentation. Augustine draws upon all the recourse he had in his arsenal, including the contextual issues dealt with by his prominent predecessors. Within the deployment of his arsenal, Cyprian played a significant role in his vision of friendship. It is pertinent that we glimpse briefly at this facet of Augustine's heritage in order to see how he utilises Cyprianic texts and style.

As we have seen, Cyprian stands alone as an arbitrating witness between the two groups. His writings stand second only to Scripture, and as it has been stated, his legacy remains a 'second canon'. It is not surprising that Augustine focuses upon him in deploying his use of tropes and images to denote ecclesial unity. Cyprian was in many ways the archetype of the African Church and the forerunner of Augustine's own episcopacy. His life, the legacy of his writings sealed with his martyrdom made Cyprian an unavoidable arbitrator of disputes. He was of noble birth in Carthage and like Augustine was given a classical education in the liberal arts and began work as a legal delegate—an Orator, a master of Rhetoric. He was a late vocation and was Martyred in 258 which cemented his veneration within the North African Church. He was an avid advocate for ecclesial unity and denounced vigorously the schismatic movement of that formed around Novatian⁴⁸ as well as those who had fallen away. Cyprian's involvement in this matter ensured that further ecclesial issues that arose in Africa would require alignment with the thought of Cyprian. The authority of his writings only being superseded by Scripture itself. In Augustine's own dispute

⁴⁸ See, Chadwick (2001), 153-154

and polemic against the Donatists, both sides, as we have seen would claim him as their patron.

For example, Augustine would insist that:

Wherefore in this treatise we have undertaken, with the help of God, not only to refute the objections which the Donatists have been wanting to urge against us in this matter, but also to advance what God may enable us to say in respect of the authority of the blessed martyr Cyprian, which they endeavour to us as a prop, to prevent their perversity from failing before the attacks of truth. And this we propose to do, in order that all whose judgment is not blinded by party spirit may understand that, so far from Cyprian's authority being in their favour, it tends directly to their refutation and discomfort.⁴⁹

Within the discourse of the history of hermeneutics within North African dispute, certain tropes served a significant role in illustrating the theology of the *Ecclesia*. Augustine would appeal to both Scripture and Cyprian in a two-pronged polemic of ecclesial unity.

Cyprian's ecclesiology was radically demarcated by the boundaries of baptism. For him, only those who have been baptised and participate in the mysteries of the Church can be considered Christian. Indeed, those who partake of baptism outside of the one Church accrue further sins rather than remission: 'It is not cleansing that men find there but soiling; their sins are not washed away but only added to'.⁵⁰ This came with other significant qualifying factors, namely the Petrine position.⁵¹ This would become the fault line between the Donatists and Augustine. However, Cyprian's view of heretics/schismatics needs further explanation. Against the Novatians and those who had lapsed (*lapsi*), Cyprian held a position that sacraments offered by those who had strayed beyond the bounds of the Church had also lost its divine authority in offering a valid

⁴⁹ AU ba, 1.1 (NPNF, 4), 411. Note: I have adapted the translation into contemporary English; 'quapropter in hoc opere adiuuante domino suscepimus non solum ea refellere, quae de hac re nobis Donatistae obiectare consueverunt, sed etiam de beatissimi martyris Cypriani auctoritate, unde suam peruersitatem, ne ueritatis impetu cadat, fulcire conantur, quae dominus donauerit dicere, ut intellegant omnes, qui non studio partium caecati iudicant, non solum eos non adiuuari auctoritate Cypriani, sed per ipsam maxime conuinci atque subuerti.', (CSEL, 51: 145.

⁵⁰ CY un, 11.

⁵¹ CY un, 4.

sacrament or anything else pertaining to Church praxis. The Trinity lives within and constitutes the life of the Church, those who leave are cut off and dead to the faith they may speak of: ‘If a man does not keep this unity...he has broken faith with the Father and the Son, he is cut off from life and salvation’.⁵² Therefore, heretics and schismatics (Cyprian makes no distinction between them in this matter) cannot offer the rites and sacraments of the Church as the Spirit is not in them. They have forfeited their own salvation, they are no longer in the ark, that is the Church. This would remain the position of most of the north African Churches. By the time of Augustine, this ecclesiology was pervasive amongst the Donatist, who as we have seen, have a diametrically opposed view to Catholics in dealing with the world and its relationship to the Church.

Cyprian’s discourse within *de ecclesiae catholicae unitate* (CY un), employs certain images which embody his theological understanding of the one Church found everywhere. As a ‘Master rhetor’ he pioneers a path Augustine will tread with his own rhetorical toolkit. Cyprian, like Augustine, would bring his skills in rhetoric to illustrate and present his arguments within the minds of those who hear his words. The deployment of tropes as an ornamental feature of Cyprian’s figurative arrangement is evident. This is not lost on Augustine as he pursues a similar strategy which he utilises within the *Tractatus* to bolster his own notion of friendship as being bound within the true Church.⁵³ Nevertheless, there are several images that Cyprian deploys as ornamental tropes, that embody in part—the whole. Indeed, he also aligns this thought with the office of an authorised Bishop: ‘The authority of the bishops forms a unity, of which each holds his part in its totality’.⁵⁴

⁵² CY un, 6.

⁵³ I have had an article which I delivered at the XVIII. International Conference at Oxford accepted for publication it deals more thoroughly with Augustine’s appropriating of Cyprian’s *de ecclesiae catholicae unitate* and its tropes utilised by Augustine within the Tractates 1-16. See, Brown, (2021) [forthcoming].

⁵⁴ CY un, 5.

Cyprian appeals to the unity of the Church as held in the unity of the chair of Peter, who he simply references to as, ‘the Rock’.⁵⁵ Everything that follows is centred upon this point of unity. Several tropes are then deployed to make the point. 1), Linking the trinitarian oneness of the Father, Son and Spirit upon whom the Church is founded, upon the revelation of Peter, Cyprian immerses this by the Holy Spirit’s inspiration of Scripture as ‘dove’ by stating: ‘this oneness of the Church is figured (*monstretur*) in the Canticle of Canticles (Song of Songs) when the Holy Spirit, speaking in the Lord’s name, says: ‘*One is my dove, my perfect one*’ (Song. 6:9), the dove being a common North African *trope* of the Church.’⁵⁶ 2), The ark of Noah was also a popular African *trope*.⁵⁷ ‘You cannot have God for your Father if you no longer have the Church for your mother. If there was any escape for one who was outside the ark of Noah, there will be as much for one who is found to be outside the Church’.⁵⁸ 3), The idea of being connected to a living organism, a tree,⁵⁹ which Augustine will draw into his notion of Jesus as the true vine. 4), A less well-known *trope* is that of the garment of Christ: ‘by the sacred symbolism (*signo*) of His garment was proclaimed the oneness of the Church’,⁶⁰ this *trope* Augustine will make much use of in his vision of ecclesial friendship.⁶¹ 5) Finally, a further biblical *trope*, that of a woman [Rahab],⁶² ‘in whom was prefigured the Church’.⁶³

⁵⁵ CY un, 4, ‘If he deserts the Chair of Peter (*cathedram Petri*) upon whom the Church was built, has he still confidence that he is in the Church?’.

⁵⁶ CY un, 4.

⁵⁷ See, 1 Peter 3.20-1; AM my, 24; TE ba, 8.

⁵⁸ CY un, 6.

⁵⁹ CY un, 5.

⁶⁰ CY un, 7.

⁶¹ See, AU Jo, 9.13 & 13.13, (see below).

⁶² CY un, 4.

⁶³ CY un, 8.

Through these ornamental tropes, often biblical images, Cyprian manifests his argument for salvific unity, that those outside the bounds of the Church, fail to participate within the life of the God of love: ‘He who has not charity has not God’. Augustine will utilise this against the separatists and declare them no friends of Christ, for those who claim unspotted cleanliness without the participation in the universal Church cannot be found within the bonds of the Trinity (CY un, 6). For the opening declaration of Cyprian’s *de Unitate* is not lost on Augustine: ‘If ye do the things that I command you, henceforth I call you not servants, but friends’ (Jn. 14. 15).⁶⁴ Indeed, Augustine even ensures that those who are found beyond the boundaries of the *Ecclesia Catholica* will only be friends of Caesar but not of Christ. Augustine through his figurative display of friendship draws all his formative rhetorical training through the Cyprianic vision of ecclesial unity displayed in his tropes. Within the *Tractatus*, Augustine will root this vision of friendship within the Johannine narrative to claim that friendship with God is an exclusive enterprise within the *Ecclesia Catholica* with both Scripture and Cyprian as his witness. For Cyprian no salvation lay beyond the bounds of the Catholic Church. For Augustine, this he clothes in friendship, and that likewise it does not exist with those beyond the boundaries of the Catholic Church, whose very life is forged within the life of the Trinity.

The next figure who is a prominent predecessor of Augustine is that of Optatus bishop of Milevis. His writings against the Donatists, ‘*against the Donatists*’⁶⁵ (OPT Par) provides another footing from which Augustine will launch his own assault. In many ways, Optatus is an important linchpin of continuity between Cyprian and Augustine, as ‘before the time of Augustine he was the only Catholic apologist in the field against the Donatists’.⁶⁶ Optatus will also pioneer a new approach that reinterprets Cyprian’s harsh homogenisation of all and will separate out the division

⁶⁴ CY un, 2.

⁶⁵ See, Mark Edward’s ‘Introduction’ to, *Optatus: Against the Donatists*, THS, (v27), n25, xvi.

⁶⁶ See, Robert B. Eno, S.S. (1999), ‘Optatus of Milevis’ in *ATA*, 596.

of schismatics from heretics paving the way for accepting the validity of the sacramental integrity of Donatist clergy. Possibly another Rhetor by trade, he clearly exhibits the understanding of accommodative speech and familiarity of *dispositio*, the art of arrangement and style *elocutio*.

Through his attack on the Donatists, Optatus, like Cyprian, deploys the ornamental feature of the *trope* and is clearly imbedded within a contextual hermeneutical tradition of Africa. He stands within an entrenched position that Augustine himself will in many ways pick up the baton from him in furthering the cause of Catholic unity. Augustine affectionately refers to him within the context of being an honoured companion within the great company of those who have proved themselves in Catholic combat with their detractors:

For what else, after all, have so many of our good believers (*multi boni fideles nostri*) done? Can we not see how much gold and silver and fine raiment Cyprian was crammed with as he came out of Egypt, that loveliest of teachers and most blessed martyrs? Or Lactantius, or Victorinus, Optatus, Hilary, not to mention the living?⁶⁷

This is true in Augustine's argument for ecclesial unity in which he draws out his theology of friendship. This is most evidently seen in the anti-Donatist material, but it does indicate a deeper and maturing vision of what a friend is. Not only does Augustine use Cyprian's writings by drawing the figurative *tropes* through his vision of friendship, he does so through the prism of Optatus, who himself develops the rhetorical figure by linking them in new ways. In many ways Cyprian provided the legal position of the debate; Optatus, a pastoral reflection of history. Augustine however takes this further and by linking it to friendship makes the notion of unity deeply personal and emotional, a key feature of Ciceronian persuasion. For by refusing unity with the Church one is rejecting

⁶⁷ AU do, 2.61 (WSA, I: 11), 171; 'nam quid aliud fecerunt multi boni fideles nostri? nonne aspicimus quanto auro et argento et ueste suffarcinatus exierit de Aegypto Cyprianus et doctor suauissimus et martyr beatissimus? quanto Lactantius? quanto Victorinus, Optatus, Hilarius, ut de uiuis taceam?'. (Simonetti, 164: 30-31).

Christ as a friend.⁶⁸ However, first let us review some of the prominent tropes Optatus both inherits and utilised for his rhetorical *apologia*.

By way of review these are the prominent tropes that Optatus deploys to display his argument via the arrangement of biblical imagery. 1), The first thing to note is that, in alignment with Cyprian, his approach is distinctively Petrine in orientation, in fact many of the other tropes depend upon this assertion, he uses the phrase, ‘the keys of Peter’,⁶⁹ also the ‘see of Rome’ (Peter) is assumed as the seat from which all other ‘sees’ are rooted in: ‘the first episcopal see was set up in Rome, which was occupied by Peter the head of all the Apostles...so that in this see unity might be preserved by all’. Therefore, Peter is a primary biblical character that embodies the whole in part. In many ways he is the hermeneutical *trope* by which all others rest upon. Peter is simply the primordial patriarch upon which *Ecclesiae Catholica* stands.⁷⁰ Here is also Optatus’ illustration of Christ’s student: ‘Now come here, all Christian people, singly and together; learn what is granted. When Peter provokes him, Christ teaches’.⁷¹ 2), Again the ark features as a *trope* of the Church as a spiritual vessel that is one.⁷² 3), The images of the vine (or tree) as an organism that once parted from it becomes fruitless.⁷³ 3), the garment is also present here.⁷⁴ I want to just pause for a moment and assert that there are various other images and figurative ways of illustrating other issues. These

⁶⁸ Müller (2012) makes the aesthetic point that the preaching of a sermon within the church building becomes the immediate representation of the Church within a world of those outside of its bounds: ‘In Augustine’s sermons, this simple space becomes first a stage, then an image of an all-embracing church: defined by walls that clearly divide those outside from those inside, it separates a hostile external world from the safety of the Christian congregation...The ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ of Augustine’s ecclesiological and mystical concepts are directly mirrored by, or set against, the structure housing the congregation’. 302.

⁶⁹ OPT Par, 1.10; 1.12.

⁷⁰ See, OPT Par, 2.2-9.

⁷¹ OPT Par, 5.3.

⁷² OPT Par, 5.1; 7.1.

⁷³ OPT Par, 1.10 (vine); 2.9, 2.8; 6.8 (tree).

⁷⁴ OPT Par, 3.9 (unity); as a symbol of belonging to the bridegroom 5:10.

few, which echo Cyprian's, emerge strongly in Augustine's *Tractatus*. Nevertheless, that focus of Augustine's figurative display of friendship is largely through the biblical characters he presents as tropes of faithful unity and praxis. All the traditional images Augustine will utilise to strengthen his hand in presenting his developed theology of friendship by way of constituting factors. The history of figurative biblical tropes by the time of Augustine has a rich and varied application and history, this is governed by the strategy of *decorum* which underpins Augustine's 'fitted-ness' of chosen tropes. The rhetorical strategy of accommodating the audience into the imaginative biblical world is key to unlocking the hearts of the listeners through the mind. The historical and contextual background give Augustine a fertile and capacious bank of rhetorical material for his hermeneutical strategy.

As we have already seen, Augustine brings to the fore his training in the art of persuasive discourse by means of his established training. His teachers, Cicero and Quintilian provided the methods by which Augustine, through the aid of Ambrose was able to break through into the world of the Word in Scripture. From his initial rejection of the Bible as a knotty and abnormal text into a work of surpassing beauty, crafted as a single piece of rhetorical eloquence, specifically the principles of *dispositio/oeconomia* and *elocutio/decorum* which forges the basis of all further exegetical endeavours. The dynamic ways in which he displays this has been demonstrated, in his early work.⁷⁵ Yet this also forces us to look at the context which Augustine is working in and what major influences there have been that shape the contours of his doctrinal diatribe which adds weight to the thrust of his theological vision of what constitutes ecclesial friendship. All of this is drawn out through the appropriation of Cyprian and Optatus, who help him frame the discussion in a way that is historically congruent with his aims and desired outcomes.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Scripture clearly forms the base substructure of the polemic in which all other appeals to authorities rest

⁷⁵ See, Cameron, (2012b).

⁷⁶ For Augustine appropriation of Cyprians ecclesiology see, Edwards (2012), 219-220.

upon. Yet, with those appropriated authorities, Cyprian and Optatus, we shall see how his rhetorical use of figurative speech is already well placed within the context of the Johannine hermeneutical invitations to ecclesial friendship.

Figuration and the Hermeneutics of Friendship

The first thing we need to outline in this section is to find displays of both the Rhetorical strategy of ornamental figurative tropes which arise out of his strategies of *dispositio/oeconomia* and *elocutio/decorum* and of his deployment of both Cyprianic and Optian influences. This is by no means an exhaustive appraisal of Augustine's figurative exploration of his sermonising of the *Tractatus* or even a commentary on every aspect or reference to friendship within the text. What follows is a selection of passages that highlight and illustrate both the rhetorical device of the figurative appropriation of tropes as embodying theological points beyond their horizons. They are intended to lead the listener to a greater truth both beyond the image which displays a broader schema of Augustine's theological vision of friendship—predicated upon being bound within the body of Christ. We shall look at how in these tropes, he draws out the theme of unity and frames it within the context of friendship.

The context of the issue of friendship with God comes within the present and pressing issue of ecclesial unity (see Chapter 1). The first way in which Augustine uses rhetorical devices to furnish his argument begins with the way in which he takes up established ecclesial tropes and develops them in terms of friendship. Some contemporary scholars have persuasively demonstrated his use of figurative tropes in new and creative dimension of his hermeneutical strategy.⁷⁷ One of the ways he deals with this is by developing the *trope* of the Church as ark (see

⁷⁷ An excellent example of this how Ployd (2011) demonstrates how Augustine takes up the trope of the dove in tractate six and shows how he makes a Pro-Nicene link between

above). In tractate two, Augustine presents the life of salvation as a journey towards our true homeland. Notions of a journey towards a new life were central to the Roman identity with a particular emphasis on Africa not being the final destination. The tails of Aeneid echo in the imagination of Augustine and of those listening in as he tells them of the Kingdom to which there is but one vessel. Parts of the classical tail of Virgil's Aeneid become drawn into the sermon: 'The King of lofty Olympus won't allow it. A long exile is your fate...the vast plains of the sea are yours to plow until you reach Hesperian land, where Lydian Tiber flows with its smooth march through rich and loamy fields, a land of hardy people. There great joy and a kingdom are yours to claim'.⁷⁸ Such evocative and memorable passages bequeathed by the Latin classical tradition along with his rhetorical training find a new *telos* and find new life within his *ecclesial* agenda. Here Augustine displays the cross itself as the central motif, a central binding factor in gaining access to the vessel of humility that is the Church that leads to eternal life: 'if you wish to live in a devout and Christian way, cling to Christ according to that which he was made for us...for our sakes, he was made into the one who would carry the weak across the sea of this world and so arrive at their home country'.⁷⁹ Augustine calls for all to dwell within the body of Christ (ark) as the vessel by which all of humanity can return to their true self which rests in Christ. The cross is a central feature of the Christian life and is, 'A wooden raft for us to cross the sea on. For no one can cross the sea of this world unless carried over it on the cross of Christ'.⁸⁰ This tractate ends with the reminder to the listeners to, 'Let this now be enough for you to build yourselves up in Christ, to be strong in faith, and to be vigilant in good works. And do not let go of the wood on which you can cross the sea.'⁸¹

the dove and the Spirit to cement the proposition that unity is constituted by God not ecclesial purity. *AS* 42 (1): 57-77.

⁷⁸ *Aeneid*, II. 966-972. (Fangles, 2006), 102.

⁷⁹ AU Jo, 2.3, 57; 'si uultis pie et christiane uiuere, haerete Christo secundum id quod pro nobis factus est ... ubi iam nauis non opus erit, quia nullum mare transitur'. (CCSL, 36: 13).

⁸⁰ AU Jo, 2.2.

⁸¹ AU Jo, 2.16.

The entire polemic is bound up with the incarnation in which the central slogan being: ‘*et uerbum caro factum est, et habitauit in nobis*’.⁸² Augustine nevertheless takes the image of the wooden cross to embody the entire life of Christ in which the well-known *trope* of the Church as ark is firmly rooted in the life of the Church as vessel, by which we enter into the mystery of the incarnation, death and resurrection, ‘Those little ones, however, who cannot understand this, by not backing away from Christ’s cross and passion and resurrection, are ferried in this boat to what they do not see; those who do see arrive in the very same boat.’⁸³ In other words, there is but one boat/ark/vessel. Augustine draws all this together to forge the foundation that Christ’s body made manifest on earth is the true ark by which all may be saved. Therefore, the only possibility of reaching the destination of heaven is via the body of Christ, the Church. Augustine flattens out the requirements of salvation as belonging to the body that is the new ark of salvation by which participation is a prerequisite if one is to benefit by the cross by which we are saved.

Augustine has here, not only philosophers who scorn the notion of the incarnation but also all, including Christians, who wish to make it ‘home’. Here the ‘wood of the cross’ is Christ. It is not about any other binding factor such as intelligence, statues, or moral purity. Everyone enters Christ in humble servitude just as he entered the world as a human being. It is the reciprocity of mutual enterprise by which we are united as one—bound within each other. However, this is most strikingly seen in tractate six. Within it, Augustine uses the image of both crow and dove to illustrate the way in which the Church is rightly ordered. That is, it contains both good and bad, wheat and chaff. It’s an argument against the Donatists who feel it is their responsibility to clean the Church and reserve it for those of the pedigree of Majorinus (Donatists) not the Caecilianist (Catholics). Augustine argues that it is God who constitutes the true Church and that human beings

⁸² This is one of the most quoted biblical phrases with Augustine’s writing. Within the *Tractatus*, it is quoted no less than thirty-one times, the majority of which are found within the first twenty tractates. For example, AU Jo, 2.15-6 (nine times); 3.6 (three times); 13.3 (twice); AU 7.1; 13.4; 13.15; 15.16; 16.17; 18.2; and AU 19.15, all quoting it once.

⁸³ AU Jo, 2.3.

have no innate purity in which they can cleanse the Church, let alone themselves. For Augustine, such attitudes display *superbia* as they claim what God has done for themselves. Of course, here Augustine has in his sights the Donatist, yet it also illustrates how he sees what the Church is and what sustains its integrity:

How fitting it was that when the crow was sent out from the ark it did not return, while when the dove was sent out it did come back—those are the two birds that Noah sent out! He had a crow with him there, he also had a dove; the ark contained each kind of bird; and if the ark was representing the Church, you can of course see how it must be that, in these unsettled times, the Church has both sorts, both the crow and the dove. Who are the crows? Those who look after their own interests. Who the doves? Those who look after Christ's interests.⁸⁴

In tractate three, we see the premium Augustine places upon dwelling within divine intimacy, shared within the Triunity of Father and Son. In this tractate, Augustine explores Jn 1. 15-18, in which he makes the link between divine unity, the Church and the call to friendship. Within this hermeneutical matrix Moses becomes the illustrative *trope* of ecclesial friendship. He begins by an emotional appeal for Christians to bear the name of Christ in humility and love,⁸⁵ and to see the incarnation as a gift of healing grace, 'he is our one and only doctor'.⁸⁶ It also deals with a call to look beyond the nature of things in order to face the God who made them.⁸⁷ The overriding thrust of this tractate is that only in Christ can humanity find healing and light in which

⁸⁴ AU Jo, 6.2, 122-3; 'merito de arca missus est coruus, et non est reuersus; missa est columba, et reuersa est: illas duas aues misit Noe. habebat ibi coruum, habebat et columbam; utrumque hoc genus arca illa continebat; et si arca figurabat ecclesiam, uidetis utique quia necesse est ut in isto diluuiio saeculi utrumque genus contineat ecclesia, et coruum, et columbam. qui sunt corui? qui sua quaerunt. qui columbae? qui ea quae Christi sunt quaerunt'. (CCSL, 36: 54).

⁸⁵ AU Jo, 3.2.

⁸⁶ AU Jo, 3.3; 3.8-9. Edmund Hill makes the point that from the Latin the phrase, 'totus medicus' in light of the proceeding passages such as, 'Iesus Christus totus', 'non hoc est totus Christus' is rightly translated as, 'he is our one and only doctor' as, 'the whole doctor' doesn't sit well within the text. As Hill notes, the theme of *totus Christus*, 'the whole Christ' is clearly present. See, AU Jo, 3.4, n6; (CCSL, 36: 21).

⁸⁷ AU Jo, 3.4; 3.21.

the incarnation alone achieves.⁸⁸ Augustine develops the Johannine phrase, ‘*in sinu patris*’ (Jn. 1:18) which follows the Vulgate, ‘*Deum nemo vidit umquam unigenitus filius qui est in sinu patris, ipse enarrauit*’.⁸⁹ This phrase, ‘*sinu*’, is rendered from the Greek ‘κόλπον’.⁹⁰ This is usually translated as, ‘bosom’ and so, ‘*in sinu patris*’ is typically translated as ‘resting in the bosom’ or at the ‘side of the Father’ (though this translation is weak). Therefore, the passage conveys an eternal scene between the Father and Son of intimate, inseparable, irreducible divine unity.

However, as Edmund Hill notes, Augustine’s use does not fit the usual pattern. He translates it as ‘lap’⁹¹ as he hermeneutically places the quotation within a context of ‘*secretum*’.⁹² This word, which can mean ‘inner council’, Augustine uses to explain it in terms of a ‘place in a tunic or a robe’, a ‘lap’ or a ‘pocket’ within a garment (I shall return to this notion of a garment below).⁹³ Nevertheless, he is clearly drawing out the notion of divine intimacy of the Son who sits in the ‘lap/pocket’ of the Father and that in Christ we are placed within the ‘inner council’ of divine indwelling. Augustine goes on to assert that this is a figurative way of expressing the inexpressible union to which Christians are called:

What is in the Father’s lap (sinu)? In the Father’s inner counsels (in secreto patris). God, of course, does not have a lap (sinum) as we have in our clothes (vestibus), nor is he to be thought of as sitting as we do, or perhaps as having wrapped (cinctus) himself in something in order to have a lap (sinum habere). But because our lap (sinus noster) is

⁸⁸ AU Jo, 3.11-13.

⁸⁹ AU Jo, 3.8-9.

⁹⁰ Augustine refers to Greek copies of the text which he claims to have consulted, see AU Jo, 3.8.

⁹¹ See, Vg, Lk 6:38, ‘date et dabitur vobis mensuram bonam confersam et coagitatam et supereffluentem dabunt in *sinum* (my italics) vestrum eadem quippe mensura qua mensi fueritis remetietur vobis’.

⁹² L&S, this word denotes broadly a secret, hidden or concealed place or conversation, 1652.

⁹³ See, Hill *Homily* 3, n15 & 16, (WSA, III: 12), 80.

intimately close to us, the Father's inner counsels are called the Father's lap (*secretum patris sinus patris uocatur*)⁹⁴

Augustine here is presenting intimacy, indwelling as a sign, a figurative type (*typus*)⁹⁵ by which intimacy is expressed. The main character here within the discourse is Moses, who through things, 'Moses saw a cloud, saw an angel, saw a fire, all part of creation'⁹⁶ came to see God in and through. In other words, Augustine is drawing a connection between indwelling intimacy with inner union with God, like that of the Father and the Son, in which Christians are called to dwell within the *sinu* of the Father with Christ. For also though Moses had not seen God and yet is described as having seen God and then as asking: 'Continue on, and you find Moses saying, If I have found favor in your sight, show me yourself openly, that I may see you. And not only did he say it; he got his answer: You cannot see my face. (Ex 33:11.13.20)'.⁹⁷ Yet, Augustine here is drawing out the notion of seeing God and talking to God in intimate proximity via agency: '*cum Moyse angelus, portans typum domini*'.⁹⁸ In essence, Moses dwells with God through the sacramental nature of things that communicates the very presence of God as an (*amicus sponsi*). This is how the discourse is shaped that Moses, the agent or servant (*seruum*) of Christ who prepares the way for the coming of God for all to see. Yet, Augustine affirms that though Moses had not literally seen God:

⁹⁴ AU Jo, 3.17, 80; 'quid est, in sinu patris [Io 1,18]? in secreto patris. non enim deus habet sinum, sicut nos habemus in uestibus, aut cogitandus est sic sedere quomodo nos, aut forte cinctus est ut sinum haberet; sed quia sinus noster intus est, secretum patris sinus patris uocatur'. (CCSL, 36: 27).

⁹⁵ As Hill notes, '*Typus* is more than "symbolic" insofar as it prefigures a future reality', WSA, I: 12, n20, 81.

⁹⁶ AU Jo, 3.17.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

These things bore the image of the Lord but did not manifest his very presence. You have it plainly in the law: And Moses used to talk with the Lord, one opposite the other, like a friend with his friend (*sicut amicus cum amico suo*)⁹⁹

This is the first explicit reference to friendship within the *Tractatus* and it gathers within it the theological vision of how he understands how: 1), It is grounded within a Christological arrangement as the foundation of all intimate union with God the Father through the Son. 2), Representation, Moses the recipient and specifically an angel as characters of divine communication through which the veiled message of Christ is given to his people—called into covenantal friendship of the triune ‘inner council’. 3), How friendship is predicated upon authorised instruction through the indwelling or resting in the, ‘*sinu patris*’ which through the body of Christ brings us into the, ‘*secretum patris*’.

Firstly, what would not be lost on the audience listening is how these elements would subliminally chime with Augustine’s exposition of the gospel within their present context. We see how Augustine through the art of biblical characters, displays them in a way as to ornamentalise their biblical role as to employ them into the living context of ecclesial unity. The notion of the gathered community as Christ’s friends (Moses being a *typus* which culminates in John the Baptist, see below) called to proclaim as prophet friends, the intimate union with God in Christ. Secondly, how Augustine as the authorised bishop is a representation of a mediating messenger (*angelus*), a lawful and recognised representative of Christ who through his words Christ communicates to his own body, the gathered community, who are in the ‘inner council’ of the Father who calls us into friendship. Nevertheless, this figurative way of seeing, the present in the biblical past is a primary way Augustine crosses the horizons of time into eternal truth. In tractate one, we see Augustine draw a parallel between human beings and messengers (*angelus*): ‘For, all human beings born of flesh,

⁹⁹ AU Jo, 3.17, 80; ‘typum domini sui gerebat, non ipsius domini praesentiam exhibebat. namque aperte habes in lege: et loquebatur Moyses cum domino, contra in contra, sicut amicus cum amico suo [Ex 33,11]’. (CCSL, 36: 28).

what are they but maggots? And from maggots he makes angels'.¹⁰⁰ All the legal context of the edict of 405 (of which we have seen) and the criminalisation of the Donatist movement would have certainly resonated with the listeners. Thirdly, it is a subtle way of figurative hermeneutics which in turn is accommodated within the present context, making the author's voice live through Augustine's very words. This first example of the involvement of friendship within his theological vision of ecclesial unity sets the tone for his entire polemic concerning what it means to be a friend of God. That what constituted intimacy was dwelling in the 'lap' of the Father through the Son, taking careful instruction from appointed messengers (bishops) who call the body of Christ into intimate unity and to face God, '*sicut amicus cum amico suo*'.

Another prominent trope that emerges from the text is that of a garment (*vestitum*) or tunic (*tunica*). Vestments of this kind are mentioned sparingly within the *Tractatus* but nearly always carry within it some meaning. The garment is for Augustine a primary *trope* within the context of ecclesial unity and friendship. Garments or tunics are only mentioned in John's gospel at 13:4, 13:12 and 19:23, which is the casting of lots for the seamless garment of Jesus. In tractate thirteen Augustine uses the image of the seamless garment to embody the image of unitive love within the Church. The garment is that of the 'bridegroom' (I shall focus more on this term in the following chapter). The context of the polemic is that of the schism of the Donatists and here Augustine takes aim at the local nature of the group as opposed to the universal Church found everywhere, a classical Cyprianic and Optian angle of approach: 'Then, your bridegroom holds the whole world; why do you, in one part of the earth, ruin it? Who is the bridegroom? God is king of all the earth (Ps 46:8)'.¹⁰¹ The argument Augustine makes is that Christians who have separated from the one universal Church have surpassed the evil of the pagans because the unity cannot be broken by

¹⁰⁰ AU Jo, 1.13, 49; 'nam omnes homines de carne nascentes, quid sunt nisi uermes? et de uermibus angelos facit' (CCSL, 36: 7).

¹⁰¹ AU Jo, 13.13, 255; 'deinde sponsus tuus totum orbem tenet; quare tu in parte corrumperis? quis est sponsus? quoniam rex omnis terrae deus [Ps 46,8]'. (CCSL, 36: 138).

those who attach to Christ and his Church but by those who lacerate and tear it. In particular, tractate six illustrates this by way of figuratively displaying both crow and dove that were sent out from the ark as embodying both those bound to the ark/Church and those who abandon it: ‘How fitting it was that when the crow was sent out from the ark it did not return, while when the dove was sent out it did come back—those are the two birds that Noah sent out!’¹⁰²

Tractate thirteen deals with the issue of unity through the trope of the garment/tunic as representing the unity of the body of Christ:

There was a tunic there; let us see what kind of tunic; woven from the top. What can the tunic woven from the top stand for but charity? What can the tunic woven from the top stand for but unity? Pay attention to this tunic, which not even Christ’s persecutors divided. After all, the psalm says, *They said to one another, Let us not divide it, but toss dice for it.* (Jn 19:23-24) There you are, that is what you heard the psalm say. The persecutors did not tear the garment; Christians do divide the Church.¹⁰³

Here the garment/tunic becomes the trope by which Augustine states that the unity of the Church is forged in holy charity, by which the Spirit is the cord of unitive love between Christians. As it is seamless, Augustine suggests that the cords cannot be broken but those who are not in the garment are not in the body where the Spirit dwells. Where a garment is present, Augustine is always figuratively displaying some meaning by it. For example, in tractate fifty-five, we see it represent the humility of Christ¹⁰⁴ and in tractate seventeen it is the glory of Christ. However, it is our next image of the garment that displays what the garment is in relation to Christians.

¹⁰² AU Jo, 6.2, 122; ‘merito de arca missus est coruus, et non est reuersus; missa est columba, et reuersa est: illas duas aues misit Noe’. (CCSL, 36: 54).

¹⁰³ AU Jo, 13.13, 255; ‘erat ibi tunica [Io 19,23]; uideamus qualis: desuper texta [Io 19,23]. desuper texta tunica quid significat nisi caritatem? desuper texta tunica quid significat nisi unitatem? hanc tunicam adtende, quam nec persecutores Christi diuiserunt. ait enim: dixerunt inter se: non diuidamus eam, sed sortem super eam mittamus [Io 19,24]. ecce unde audistis Psalmum. uestem persecutores non consciderunt; christiani ecclesiam diuidunt’. (CCSL, 36: 138). See also AU Jo, 35.7.

¹⁰⁴ See also, AU Jo, 4.8 as a *trope* of the humility of John the Baptist.

In tractate six and nine we see the garment as a *trope* of what unity means for the Christian. Augustine imports into the text of John (a common theme that I shall deal with below) the story of the wedding banquet (Mt 22:1-14) to illustrate the consummation of the Church, who is eligible for salvation and who is not. The context of tractate six is that of a juxtaposition of John the Baptist who represents the *Ecclesiae Catholica* and Donatus who represents members of the *parti Donati* (I shall deal with this more thoroughly in the next chapter). Augustine use the image of the garment that is given to the wedding guest as a figurative *trope* of salvific friendship:

That man was no friend of the bridegroom (*ille non erat amicus sponsi*), because if he had been, he would have sought the bridegroom's honor, not his own. Notice the friend of the bridegroom saying, this is the one who baptizes. That man was no friend of the bridegroom, the one for whose sake you are suffering. You do not have a wedding garment on (*non habes uestem nuptialem*); even if you have come to the banquet, you have to be thrown outside¹⁰⁵

We also see this in tractate nine which reiterates what is said in tractate six. Here we have again the garment which is deployed as a figurative *trope* of what unitive salvation achieves, to be clothed in friendship:

And that is why the Donatists have been, as it were, thrown out of the wedding, like that man who did not have on a wedding garment (*non habet uestem nuptialem*); he was invited and came, but was thrown out from the number of the guests because he did not have on a garment to honor the bridegroom (*non habebat uestem nuptialem*) ... Nor was it undeserved that the one who was not wearing a wedding garment (*non habebat uestem nuptialem*) should be reproached for what he was not: *Friend, why have you come in here?* (Mt 22:12) (*amice, quid huc uenisti?*). And just as he was silent, so are these people.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ AU Jo, 6.23, 141; 'non erat ille amicus sponsi; nam si amicus esset sponsi, gloriam sponsi quaereret, non suam. uide amicum sponsi dicentem: hic est qui baptizat [Io 1,33]. ille non erat amicus sponsi, pro quo pateris. non habes uestem nuptialem; et si ad conuiuium uenisti, foras habes mitti; immo quia foras missus es'. (CCSL, 36: 65).

¹⁰⁶ AU Jo, 9.13, 193; 'et ideo Donatistae tamquam proiecti de nuptiis, sicut ille homo qui non habebat uestem nuptialem, inuitatus est et uenit, sed proiectus est de numero uocatorum, quia non habebat uestem ad sponsi gloriam ... nec immerito illi qui non habebat uestem nuptialem, hoc per increpationem obiectum est, quod non erat: amice, quid huc uenisti? [Mt 22,12] et sicut ille obmutuit, ita et isti. quid enim prodest strepitus oris, muto corde? nouerunt quippe intus apud semetipsos non se habere quod dicant'. (CCSL, 36: 97).

The image of the garment draws together the trinitarian action of the Spirit as the bond of love which is the foundation of Christian friendship. Here we see that the *trope* of the garment is deployed as both Church and Spirit which, as we have seen, makes friendship possible with God within the body of the Son. The garment as undivided charity underpins the trinitarian action of the Church as an embodiment of Christian love as a garment of friendship. The Spirit as the soul of the Church which binds all in all. Friendship therefore here serves as the result of participation within the undivided Church throughout all nations.

So far, we have seen how the tropes display various aspects of what constitutes and achieves ecclesial friendship, that is being an *amicus Dei* by belonging to the Christ through his Church (earthly body). The garment serves as an image of intimate unity, in that those who are invited to the wedding banquet are those who are what Donatists (and therefore all beyond the bounds of the unity of the body of Christ) are not—*amicus Christi*. Being in God's 'lap' and 'inner council'. To a garment of seamless unity and finally to that of a garment of friendship. All these flows from the first, that Christ is the ark by which progress in the journey home can only be made by being within the vessel of his body, the Church. We see how Augustine weaves the thread of ecclesial unity into the grammar of friendship which highlights his theology of friendship being primarily about participation. This participation is where the trinitarian life is imparted to its members of Christ's own body which shares in the bond of love between Father and Son through the Spirit of Charity. Only by indwelling in the Church as body can we rest in the heart of God's garment and remain within the salvific horizon of divine friendship. However, our next example draws upon another embedded image to display what Christian friendship entails.

In tractate fifteen Augustine, taking his lead from Cyprian (see above) deals with the figure of the woman at the well (Jn 4:7) as a figure of the Church (*forma ecclesiae*): 'This passage has been read, and in my hands I am holding this reading to be discussed, namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ was at Jacob's well, talking with a woman from Samaria. Indeed, great mysteries and figures of

great realities'.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, for Augustine the whole passage is 'full of mysteries, pregnant in symbols'¹⁰⁸ and Augustine sees significance in almost all of its parts which is drawn up into the figure of the woman. For Augustine she is a *trope* of the Church a '*praemisit figuram*' of the gentile's inclusion into the promise of the Messiah. She is a prefiguring for how Christ finds and establishes the Church from all nations, that all are called into the universal fellowship of faith, though being adulterous, sinful and weak. .¹⁰⁹

Augustine allegorises the issue of weakness and draws parallels with the creation of Eve from Adam's rib, just as the new woman (the Church) is made out of that which flows out of the side of the crucified Christ.¹¹⁰ Augustine also develops the image of the well, '*fons Iacob*' a prefiguring of the font of baptism as a united stream of living water. The undivided and sealed font is a reference to Song of Songs, 4:12, '*hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa hortus conclusus fons signatus*', to Song of Songs, 6:9 to denote the unity of Church and of the bishops pledge to preserve the validity of baptism. These scriptural citations were a common feature of the polemic surrounding the Donatist claim which stems from Cyprian: (CY un, 11), '*Quando aliud baptisma praeter unum esse*

¹⁰⁷ AU Jo, 15.1, 193; 'hoc lectum est, et hanc lectionem tractandam gestamus in manibus, quod dominus Iesus ad puteum Iacob loquebatur cum Samaritana muliere. dicta enim ibi sunt magna mysteria, et magnarum similitudines rerum'. (CCSL, 36: 151). The word in this passage, '*similitudines*' Hill has translated as 'figure' but is more commonly rendered 'likeness, resemblance, similitude', see L&S, 'similitudo', 1701. Though it must be noted that it is likely that 'magnarum similitudines rerum' is one idiomatic phrase.

¹⁰⁸ AU Jo, 15.5, 277; 'plena mysteriis, et grauida sacramentis', (CCSL, 36: 152).

¹⁰⁹ AU Jo, 15.10; 'pertinet ad imaginem rei, quod ab alienigenis uenit ista mulier, quae typum gerebat ecclesiae; uentura enim erat ecclesia de gentibus, alienigena a genere Iudaeorum. audiamus ergo in illa nos, et in illa agnoscamus nos, et in illa gratias deo agamus pro nobis. illa enim figura erat, non ueritas; quia et ipsa praemisit figuram, et facta est ueritas. nam credidit in eum, qui de illa figuram nobis praetendebat. uenit ergo haurire aquam [Io 4,7]. simpliciter uenerat haurire aquam, sicut solent uel uiri uel feminae. (CCSL, 36: 154). It is also worth noting the overtones of Christ as the one who justifies, a subtle attack upon Donatist claims of self-purgation and purity.

¹¹⁰ AU Jo, 15.8; 'sub hac rerum imagine Adam qui erat forma futuri, praebuit nobis magnum indicium sacramenti; immo deus in illo praebuit. nam et dormiens meruit accipere uxorem, et de costa eius facta est ei uxor, quoniam de Christo in cruce dormiente futura erat ecclesia de latere eius, de latere scilicet dormientis, quia et de latere in cruce pendens lancea percusso sacramenta ecclesiae profluxerunt.' (CCSL, 36: 153).

non possit, baptizare posse se opinantur; vitae fonte deserto. Augustine is clearly tapping into the Cyprianic argument of baptism being one and only valid within the bounds of the ecclesia. However, Augustine also makes the strong link in AU Jo, 15.12 with that of the Holy Spirit as gift, ‘*donum dei est spiritus sanctus*’ with, ‘*sed interrupto meatu, tamquam a fontis tramite separata fuerit, non dicitur aqua uiua; sed illa aqua uiua dicitur, quae manans excipitur. talis aqua erat in illo fonte*’. (CCSL, 36: 155).¹¹¹ Nevertheless, Augustine through the Scriptural image of the woman presents her as the prefiguring of the Church of all nations who is justified by the grace of God in encountering Christ. Therefore, the sacramental unity of the Church is given gratis, which is the gift of the ‘Holy Spirit’, given by Christ to his own body which constitutes the bonds of unity within the trinitarian matrix of reciprocal participation.¹¹² Augustine draws this into the ecclesial nexus of a place of spiritual safety, a place where one can receive life and friendship. Augustine cites Sg 4:8, as indicating the coming of the Church with Is 7:9, that the Church is a place of understanding through faith and the place of encounter with Jesus. The intimate relationship between the Church and Jesus is almost indistinguishable for Augustine in his ecclesiology:

So then, in terms of that woman, his drink was also that he should do the will of the one who had sent him. Therefore, he said, I am thirsty; give me a drink (Jn 19:28; 4:7),²⁷ so that he might produce faith in her and drink her faith and make it part of his body; his body, you see, is the Church.¹¹³

¹¹¹ See, Shuve (2016), 23-48. Also see, Optatus, 2:13; AU Cre, 2.17.

¹¹² The views on the role of baptism are usually categorised as becoming effective within the life of the Church and so become valid when one participates within the bounds of the *Ecclesia Catholica*. However, I take Ployd’s point that, ‘effective baptism is not simply about the forgiveness of sins but even more so about the positive growth of love. This growth in love—the very love that is the Holy Spirit—only takes place in the unity of the church, but it is also what establishes that unity’, (2015), n62, 170-171.

¹¹³ AU Jo, 15.31, 294; ‘ergo et potus ipse erat in illa muliere, ut faceret uoluntatem eius, qui miserat eum. ideo dicebat: sitio, da mihi bibere [Jo 4,7], scilicet ut fidem in ea operaretur, et fidem eius biberet, et eam in corpus suum traiceret; corpus enim eius ecclesia’. (CCSL, 36: 163).

In this sense, Jesus doing the will of the Father is extended to the Church as his own body and therefore the mission of the Church is to proclaim Christ. This is also a veiled attack on schismatics and heretics who point not to Christ but to themselves (see Ch 4). The climax of the tractate is that it is Christ who harvests the Church, ‘this harvest is growing among weeds’.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, those who proclaim Christ are the true Church as they belong to him through the Spirit who binds them within God’s own life. Those who participate and preach are therefore friends:

The woman first brought the news, and on her evidence the Samaritans came to believe, and they urged him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days, and more of them came to believe; and when they had come to believe, they said to the woman, We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world. First, by a report, afterwards by his presence. That is how it happens today with those who are outside and are not yet Christians; they are told about Christ by Christian friends (*Christus nuntiatur per christianos amicos*); Christ was proclaimed through that woman, who was the Church proclaiming him; they come to Christ; they believe by her account; he stays with them two days, that is, he gives them the two commandments of charity, and many more believe in him, and more firmly too, since he truly is the savior of the world.¹¹⁵

Summary

Throughout this chapter we have seen how Augustine, within a long held Latin tradition, deploys his rhetorical training in turning the Scriptures in order to deliver his figurative tropes. Through his encounters with Ambrose’s preaching he was helped in seeing the Scriptures as

¹¹⁴ AU Jo, 15.32.

¹¹⁵ AU Jo, 15.33, 295-6; ‘mulier primum nuntiauit, et ad mulieris testimonium crediderunt Samaritani, et rogauerunt eum ut apud eos maneret, et mansit ibi biduo, et plures crediderunt; et cum credidissent, dicebant mulieri: non iam propter uerbum tuum credimus, sed ipsi cognouimus, et scimus quia uere hic est saluator mundi [Io 4,42]; primo per famam, postea per praesentiam. sic agitur hodie cum eis qui foris sunt, et nondum sunt christiani; Christus nuntiatur per christianos amicos; tamquam illa muliere, hoc est ecclesia annuntiante, ad Christum ueniunt, credunt per istam famam; manet apud eos biduo, hoc est, dat illis duo praecepta caritatis; et multo plures et firmitus in eum credunt, quoniam uere ipse est saluator mundi. (CCSL, 36: 164).

worthy of his renewed attention. We also see the incremental steps by which he is able to arrive at his view that the Scriptures were a singularly inspired arrangement of divine wisdom, in which he was able to enter into them in a dynamic and fruitful way. It was this breakthrough which enabled him to see the Church as a viable vessel to journey home. Through the rhetorical art of ‘accommodative’ speech and the strategy of divine *dispositio* (arrangement) Augustine transfers his secular tools to a divine discourse of which as bishop becomes the elected Orator of the sacred texts. As preacher Augustine draws upon his toolkit in order to win over his listener to his theological vision of ecclesial unity. Within the *Tractatus* we see Augustine drawing down on not only the art of rhetoric by accommodating the text to the living tradition of the Church but also weaving through the discourse of the inherited images of North African scriptural notion of the Church.

Within the matrix of Augustine’s polemic on ecclesial unity, we glimpse how he imported and deployed Scriptural texts into his homilies (*Tractatus*) to cement his ecclesial polemic in deploying his vision of divine friendship. For Augustine, friendship was an indwelling of one soul with another, which rooted itself within the deepest parts of one’s own being. It was the resting of one’s life upon, and within another in a mutually reciprocal exchange. This Ciceronian notion of friendship becomes ‘ecclesialised’ within the nexus of the trinitarian life of God, by which he calls all Christians is to rest within, and to be bound within. This for Augustine is only made possible by the indwelling of individuals within the Church, as the life of the Church is created and constituted by Christ who give the gift of the Holy Spirit to his own body—the Church. Therefore, the extension of the divine bond of love between Father and Son, the inner council—is extended to the members of the Church as participants within the life of the triune God. Friendship is resting love by which humanity is called into intimate union with the Father and the Son through the bonds of the Holy Spirit which binds,—*religare* God-in-God and humanity within the divine life through the true *religio* in the one true Church.

In the *Tractatus*, we see this vision of friendship clearly displayed and within the context of the issue of ecclesial unity we see a fresh vision of how Augustine's understanding of friendship has developed into a broader universal offering for all, men and women, free and slave, rich or poor, for all are called to the unity of friendship in Christ through his Church. For it is worth reminding ourselves that:

For, if charity is so great that it makes your soul and your friend's soul into one soul here below (*si enim hic tanta caritas est, ut animam tuam et animam amici tui unam animam faciat*), how could Father and Son not be one God up there? May sincere faith never entertain such an idea!¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ AU Jo, 14.9, 270; 'si enim hic tanta caritas est, ut animam tuam et animam amici tui unam animam faciat; quomodo ibi non est unus deus pater et filius? absit ut hoc sentiat fides non ficta'. (CCSL, 36: 148).

Chapter 5

The *Amicus Sponsi*: John the Baptist and the Vision of Christian Friendship

interrogo Iohannem: qui te misit baptizare in aqua, quid tibi dixit? super
quem uideris spiritum descendentem, sicut columbam, et manentem
super eum, ipse est qui baptizat in spiritu sancto [Jo 1,33].

Tractate, 5.1¹

quoniam Iohannes baptista quanto praeclarius erat in natis
mulierum, et quanto humilior ad cognoscendum dominum,
tanto meruit esse amicus sponsi

Tractate, 4.1²

Introduction

In the previous chapter we have seen the way in which Augustine utilises and denucleates John's gospel in order to display his vision of ecclesial friendship through his rhetorical strategy of figuration. This approach centres upon his strategy of accommodation, to make known the will of Christ through the words of Holy Scripture in which in his expositions of John he draws out the figurative displays of the Church and friendship. Through these tropes, which had a substantive pedigree within North African discourse, we have seen how Augustine presents his hermeneutic of the Church in relation to friendship through figurative tropes. In this chapter, the sole focus of our exploration is centred upon the figure of John the Baptist. It must be noted that within this

¹ AU Jo 5.1, 102; 'I ask John, "The one who sent you to baptize in water, what did he say to you?" On whomever you see the Spirit coming down like a dove and resting on him, he is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit (Jn 1:33).

² AU Jo 4.1, 86; 'and you know very well that John the Baptist—insofar as he was the most outstanding among those born of women (Mt 11:11) and the most humble in acknowledging the Lord—was all the more deserving of being the friend of the bridegroom'.

field of study concerning Augustine's exegesis on the figure of John the Baptist there is a limited selection of scholarship.³ Very little exists on Augustine's hermeneutic of John the Baptist. Nevertheless, within this work, John stands out as a central illustrative and illuminating trope which conveys most fully for Augustine, what it means to be a friend of Christ, an—*amicus sponsi* (Jn. 3:29b).

Initially, we explore the figure of John and why he presents Augustine with such an encapsulating vision of Christian discipleship. He is one who stands upon the fulcrum of salvation history and resides in such close proximity to the saviour. John stands in a line of succession which has a direct relationship to current Church ministers as well as lay members. We explore the attributes of John and how Augustine utilises these to demonstrate the futility of claiming to be with Christ whilst not standing within his bride who alone can hear the voice of the bridegroom. Through John we explore Augustine's reflection upon John as a prime example of what it means to represent and proclaim Christ to a world beyond the bounds of Catholic Christianity. For Augustine, humility is a key sign of unity, of which John is a shining example.

The Juxtaposition to this, is of course the Donatists who claim to be Christians but, unlike John do not point to and proclaim him because they do not belong to him. This is in clear reference to the Church being Christ's body, and as we shall see, Augustine makes the point that one cannot be a Christian without belonging to the one bride. This again is clothed in the garment of friendship. Augustine calls his listeners who stand before him to serve Christ through and as members of his Church; to be another John the Baptist, another '*amicus sponsi*', who was both a servant and a friend. Augustine's call to those standing and listening is, believe, belong, be true friends.

³ Lienhard (1995), (2001); Dulaey (2006).

The Figure of John

The figure of John the Baptist within the New Testament as well as the Christian tradition in general, has a unique and elevated position.⁴ This is due to his role and relationship to Jesus, for as well as having the privilege of pointing Jesus out as the Messiah the Lamb of God, he was also his cousin. From the beginning of the account of Jesus' life, John is present and, by the Spirit is the first to both recognise and worship him (Lk 1:41). From the outset, the lives of John and Jesus are inextricably linked, bound together not just because they are relatives but because they share together in the mission of God, one as proclaimer the other as the proclaimed. John is a servant 'who was also a friend' and the Word of whom he exclaimed: "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mk 1:7-8).⁵ No one besides Peter and Paul are mentioned more by Augustine than John the Baptist. He is a preeminent figure of whom Augustine will remind his listeners: 'among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he' (Mt 11:11). John represents a new age in which the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob arrives at the consummation of the coming of the Messiah and of the arrival of the Church.

In Augustine's theology, the notion of the two epochs of salvation history, in which John stands in between, was demarcated as the two dispensations. John is the man who stands between two Testaments, one of the Law and the Prophets (*lex et prophetate*), the other of the Church and the authentic minister of grace. Augustine sees John the Baptist in terms of a historical marker in this regard, a '*une sorte de pivot entre les deux Testaments*'.⁶ He is the last Prophet of the Old Testament

⁴ For contemporary studies on John the Baptists see, Markus (2018); Finegan (1992), 3-21.

⁵ See also, Mt 3:11; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:27.

⁶ Dulaey (2006), 43.

times and faithfully passes it on and proclaims the new dispensation of grace. The forerunner who was sent to: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight’ (Mt 3:3). Augustine, in his classic agricultural prose, presents John as a ‘boundary-stone’ a classic Roman means of marking agricultural land: ‘So John appearing as the boundary-stone between the two Testaments, the Old and the New’.⁷ Thus, John has a unique position within salvation history as the one who straddles the dispensation of God covenants (*testamentorum*). Being the greatest amongst men, he is the one in whom the old dispensation reaches its climax, and John who came Baptising, had the privilege of handing it over to Christ and pointing (*ostendere*) at Jesus: ‘He must increase, but I must decrease’ (Jn 3:30).⁸ In tractate four, Augustine states: ‘And so the prophets before him were allowed to foretell future events in relation to Christ, but John had the honor of pointing him out with his finger’.⁹ This term Augustine uses for pointing, ‘*ostendere*’, is also significant as it is most commonly understood in terms of ‘showing’ or ‘displaying’.¹⁰ John’s *persona* embodies, displays the *lex et prophetae* through whom, as the forerunner, paves the way for the fulfilment of the *lex* which Christ alone embodies. In this regard John, in whom the faith of the fathers is represented, specifically as the prophet Elijah, (Mt 11:14)¹¹ is handed over to Jesus who completes it in himself and hands it back to the Father. It is in this exchange that the Church is forged and that future generations ‘return’ to the Father in the Son, through the Spirit. This, as we have seen is within Augustine’s age, through the body of his Church—*ecclesia*. These he describes as ‘*christianis temporibus*’.¹²

⁷ AU s, 293.2, (trans, mine, from Lienhard (2001), 202); ‘Ioannes interiectus quidam limes testamentorum duorum, ueteris et noui’. (PL, 38: 1328).

⁸ AU s, 194.2.

⁹ AU Jo, 4.1, 86; ‘itaque prophetis praecedentibus praenuntiare de Christo futura concessum est; huic autem digito ostendere.’ (CCSL, 36: 31).

¹⁰ See, L&S, 1283.

¹¹ See AU Jo, 4.6.

¹² AU Ev, I.24, (trans, mine); ‘Christian times’. (CSEL, 43: 22).

Out of the four accounts of the gospel, two offer a unique and insightful glimpse into the figure of John not offered by the other two. Firstly, Luke's account provides us with the conception and birth of John and his family connection to Jesus in intimate terms. The other is in John, who offers distinctive and insightful passages about the Baptist (Jn 1,3 & 5). Figures of veneration within the early Church held a privileged position. The age of Constantine marked a flourishing of interest in the Saints which had become industrial in scope within the age of Augustine'.¹³ In Hippo, the veneration of the Saints, as well as everywhere in Numidia, was a central feature of the Christian life. Those who had made their mark not in ink but in blood occupied the highest honor within the hearts of the faithful. In Hippo John was celebrated amongst a select few of elevated figures and festivals.¹⁴ Augustine is the first to mention the western celebration of his nativity which is placed in contrast to the Eastern Churches on the 24th of June. Sermon 379 (= s. *Lambot* 20), Delivered on that day Augustine states: 'Saint John the Baptist whose birthday is celebrated today, who amongst people was the greatest and testified of the Christ the Lord by witnessing: "*in natis mulierum nemo surrexit maior* [Mt 11,11]".¹⁵ The date is delineated from the 25th March which is the date of the conception and that of Elizabeth being six months pregnant (Lk 1:36). The data

¹³ Peter Brown (1981) states: In the course of the late fourth and fifth centuries, the growth of the cult of martyrs caused a visible shift in the balance of importance accorded to the areas of the living and the areas of the dead in most late-antique towns. Great architecture mushroomed in the cemeteries. To take only one example: at the beginning of the fifth century, the north African city of Tebessa came to be flanked by an enormous pilgrimage site, built in the cemetery area, presumably around the grave of Saint Crispina. The shrine was in the full-blooded, public style associated with the Theodosian renaissance. Its pilgrim's way, 150 meters long, passed under great triumphal arches and along arcaded courtyards, echoing, among the tombs outside Tebessa, the porticoes and streets of a classical city. In the same years Paulinus of Nola could congratulate himself on having built around the grave of Saint Felix, in a peripheral cemetery area still called Cimitile, lithe cemetery," a complex so impressive that the traveler might take it for another town. 7-8.

¹⁴ See, Van Der Meer (1961), 475. AU s, 287; 288; 289; 290; 291; 292; 293;

¹⁵ AU s, 379.1, (trans, mine); 'sanctus Iohannes baptista, cuius natiuitatis dies hodie celebratur, tam magnus exstitit inter homines ut dominus Christus ei tale testimonium perhiberet dicens: in natis mulierum nemo surrexit maior Iohanne baptista [Mt 11,11]' (*Revue Bénédictine*, 59: 62). See also, AU s, 293D (s. *Guelf.* 22,1).

therefore of the 24th June derives from these dates, which is explicable via the Roman calendar ‘on which the feasts fell “on the eighth day before the Kalends”’.¹⁶

Within the context of the Catholic and Donatist history, the figure of John is presented as a man with clear inferences to that context. As noted in the ‘Introduction’, Sherwin’s Article (1998), argues convincingly that Augustine’s spousal image of John as the ‘*amicus sponsi*’ as a figurative expression of presenting the prophets and Priest of the first dispensation and God’s friends and therefore the second dispensation of Bishops, Priests and Deacons as a continuity of those authentic ministers who represent God faithfully. Sherwin’s article is convincing, yet as I will demonstrate later, it also applies to all Catholics—the ‘little hills’ not just the ‘lofty mountains’ (see below). Nevertheless, the notion of presenting the great men of faith as friends is key to the broader vision he arrives at. Again, within tractate four, Moses is presented as one who sits in the inner council of God, one who resides in the *sinus* of the Father, within the very bosom of his presence. As noted above, the notion of the *sinus* of the Father is intrinsic to Augustine’s notion of the Church and Trinity, as it is bound within the very *hypostasis/persona* of the Word who in Christ forges the link between his members and the inner life of God. The Church therefore is bound within the inner council of the Triunity of God and presented through Christ to the Father as his friends. Within the first dispensation, Moses is a key example of this within the tractate:

He says, *The Only-begotten Son who is in the Father’s lap has made him known (Jn 1:18). What is in the Father’s lap?* In the Father’s inner counsels. God, of course, does not have a lap as we have in our clothes, nor is he to be thought of as sitting as we do, or perhaps as having wrapped himself in something in order to have a lap. But because our lap is intimately close to us, the Father’s inner counsels are called the Father’s lap. The one in the Father’s inner counsels who knows the Father, he it is that has interpreted him; *for no one has ever seen God*. So then, he came and told what he had seen. But what had Moses seen? Moses saw a cloud, saw an angel, saw a fire, all part of creation. These things bore the image of the Lord, but did not manifest his very presence. You have

¹⁶ Lienhard (2001), n1, 270.

it plainly in the law: And Moses *used to talk with the Lord, one opposite the other, like a friend with his friend.*¹⁷

This notion of an ‘inner council’ (*sinu*) is bound with the Church as a body of participating indwellers. This is a clear indication of Sherwin’s thesis. However, in my view it remains too narrow in limiting it to simply the official ministers of God’s community (I shall deal with this more thoroughly below). Yet this brings us back to the context of Augustine’s notion of John as a minister. Like Moses or other illustrious members of God’s ‘inner council’ as friendship; Augustine is clearly presenting John as a faithful friend of Christ, one who like Moses, belongs to the ‘inner council’ and thus is an authentic minister of God’s Word and who is also a friend. Within this matrix, and within the context of authenticity, Augustine is clearly taking aim at the Donatists as false prophets, legalistic pharisees, those who sought to represent themselves rather than God’s Word. Like all polemics concerning Donatists, one figure stands out as particularly poignant at this point, through the image of John, and that is Cyprian. As we have seen (above), the reading and the presentation of the tropes has an historical as well as a figurative performative function.

In the shadow of Augustine’s appropriation of John the Baptist, Cyprian emerges. There are many parallels between the two which would not have been lost on Augustine’s audience. John was known as ‘the greatest of men’. In North Africa, Cyprian was known as a great man too. Yet there are significant parallels between the ‘greatest of men’ and the great man of Western North Africa, Cyprian. Both were faithful ministers of God’s Word and fiercely stringent in defending the truth; of pointing to Christ, one to the man the other his bodily bride—the Church. Neither

¹⁷ AU Jo, 3.17, 80; ‘sed unigenitus, inquit, filius qui est in sinu patris, ipse enarrauit [Io 1,18]. quid est, in sinu patris [Io 1,18]? in secreto patris. non enim deus habet sinum, sicut nos habemus in uestibus, aut cogitandus est sic sedere quomodo nos, aut forte cinctus est ut sinum haberet; sed quia sinus noster intus est, secretum patris sinus patris uocatur. in secreto patris qui patrem nouit, ipse enarrauit. nam deum nemo uidit umquam [Io 1,18]. ipse ergo uenit, et narrauit quidquid uidit. quid uidit Moyses? Moyses uidit nubem, uidit angelum, uidit ignem: omnis illa creatura est; typum domini sui gerebat, non ipsius domini praesentiam exhibebat. namque aperte habes in lege: et loquebatur Moyses cum domino, contra in contra, sicut amicus cum amico suo [Ex 33,11]. (CCSL, 36: 28).

sought their own glory but delighted in humility. They also shared a ministry of re-alignment in calling others who had Lapsed (*Lapsis*) back into the fold of the faith and to subject themselves to the judgment of God. John's wranglings with the Scribes and Pharisees echo Cyprian's own struggles with the Lapsed and the challenge to his authority by the Confessors—not to mention Stephen, Cyprian's challenger across the sea. Both were persecuted and martyred by beheading at the behest of the civil powers for their fidelity to being servants and *amicus Dei*. In drawing out John as an example of faithful friendship with God, who is within the line of Moses, Augustine is deploying this as a prefiguring of what it means to be a faithful friend of Christ.

Was He not the Friend of the Bridegroom?¹⁸

Augustine throughout his preaching most often referred to John as the Baptist, or simply John. Titles played little part in describing him in general. Yet, within the *Tractatus*, the most common mention of John is as the *amicus sponsi*, 'the friend of the bridegroom'. This title comes from a phrase within the text of John 3:27-30:

John answered, "No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom (*amicus autem sponsi*), who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."¹⁹

Augustine cites Jn 3.29 more than forty-six throughout his works. Vg has '*amicus autem sponsi*'. Augustine, however, simply flattens this out into a pithier phrase, the '*amicus sponsi*'. Everything in which Augustine will describe concerning what John is about resides in this

¹⁸ AU Jo, 7.5.

¹⁹ See, Houghton (2008), 213.

paragraph. This phrase *amicus sponsi*, is exhaustively utilised in his polemic against the Donatists. Yet first, we need to explore why he does so.

The first thing which leaps out from the phrase is that it sits within a context of figurative tropes, concerning friendship and the Church of which we have seen (chapter 4). In many ways this phrase is deployed in order to present John as a figure who represents the Church (*figurabat ecclesiam*) and the meaning of its membership. He is the one who hears the voice of the bridegroom and rejoices because he is his friend. In turn the bride reciprocates with the same joy at the bridegroom's *vox*. It is the Church's destiny to proclaim Christ and to find its fulfilment in the increase of his name. This is what makes for a friend of Christ to belong to his body—the bride: 'He who has the bride is the bridegroom'. This notion of faithful reciprocity cements through the Biblical image the achievement of love's summit; that it resides in one another. One can only be a friend of Christ if one has Christ, the whole Christ—head and body: 'The head is the only-begotten Son of God and his body is the Church—bridegroom and bride, two in one flesh'.²⁰ This within the *Tractatus* is set against Donatists who do not have the bride and are therefore are not friends of the bridegroom. They possess only themselves; they are friends of one another, yet they are not friends of Christ. The expediency of this title feeds into this polemic, yet as always, through it, Augustine displays and cements the notion of what friendship is. If it is founded upon Christ, then it must be invested in him in a reciprocal exchange of participation. Within this matrix of ecclesiology, one cannot therefore be a friend of Christ apart from his body, despite claims to the contrary. The spousal imagery dovetails with all other figurative expressions of this presentation of his notion of ecclesial friendship—the only true friendship possible.

We have seen the spousal tropes which had a long and rich tradition within North Africa. The tropes of 'dove', 'wedding garments' and that of the Samaritan woman. In this trajectory, John

²⁰ AU Do, (4)7 (WSA, I: 21), 613; 'totus Christus caput et corpus est: caput unigenitus dei filius et corpus eius ecclesia, sponsus et sponsa, duo in carne una'. (CSEL, 52: 238).

represents the most explicit example of this. John is simply the '*amicus sponsi*', the one in whom Augustine most clearly expresses his ecclesial notion of Christian friendship. Like many of the biblical tropes, they are set against Donatus who is in opposition to the witness of Scripture and the Church. One is an '*amicus sponsi*', the other is not. As we have seen above, 'Donatists have been, as it were, thrown out of the wedding, like that man who did not have on a wedding garment' (AU Jo, 9.13). They have no share in the bride because they do not belong to the bride's body which is betrothed to the bridegroom. The most explicit example of this is in tractate six: 'you are not in the dove if you are suffering for Donatus. That man was no friend of the bridegroom ... That man was no friend of the bridegroom, the one for whose sake you are suffering. You do not have a wedding garment on; even if you have come to the banquet, you have to be thrown outside' (AU Jo, 6.23). Yet, in relation to John as a central cementing figure, he is set explicitly alongside Donatus. The two representing what one *is* and what the other *is not*. This, as we have seen, ties into Augustine's tropes of crow and dove (see above). John is key, as he touches upon several themes that Augustine can utilise.

One of the key issues Catholics faced with Donatists as we have explored was the validity of the sacraments and of the claim of ecclesial contamination via *traditor* bishop deriving from the apostolic line of Caecilian. There was a dispute over Donatists utilisation of John the Baptist as an example of the need for rebaptism.²¹ Donatists claimed that rebaptism was necessary in order to genuinely receive the Holy Spirit and that not all baptism conveyed it and were therefore invalid sacraments (Acts 19:1-7). Augustine fought over this debate which saw John the Baptist drawn into the centre ground.²² The claim of validity goes to the very heart of the schism as we have seen (chapter 1). Augustine deploys John the Baptist through his hermeneutical 'turning' as a definitive *trope* as another embodying *figura* who reveals the true nature of the Church. It is only the true

²¹ For example, AU Pet, 2.86

²² See, AU Pet, 2.84-88.

Church that, like John the Baptist points, shows, displays Christ, and demonstrates that Christ's friends do likewise because they are the true members of his very body—other selves. Donatists claimed that the need for rebaptism is witnesses in the rebaptism of disciples of John by Paul because they had not received the Holy Spirit. In other words, Donatists saw these two baptisms as analogous to one another. Catholic's, particularly Augustine, saw them as connected yet separate as one pointed to the other yet are not the same. Upon this point Augustine challenges the claim that this is a proof-text for mandating re-baptism. For Augustine, Christ's baptism fulfils John's:

Would Your Graces please take note: just why was the dove chosen as the sign of I-don't-know-what, such that a dove, that is the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, descended on the Lord when he had been baptized and rested upon him, so that in the coming of the dove, John came to know that, in the Lord, there is a proprietary authority to baptize? Because through this personal authority, the peace of the Church, as I have said, has been firmly established. And it can happen that someone has baptism apart from the Dove, but it is not possible that a baptism apart from the Dove would benefit him.²³

Augustine thus declares their theology of baptism null and void. Without the Church in which the sanctifying Spirit dwells, claims of efficacious validity fails, as those who dwell beyond the bounds of its unitive peace, carries no benefit. Since John, unlike Donatus is a friend of the bridegroom, his baptism does not stand in opposition to it but rather points to it, much like everything else about him. For John was a true friend who claimed: *'Are you coming to me to be baptized? It is I who ought to be baptized by you.* (Mt 3:14).²⁴ It is also worth noting that Augustine through his theology of schismatic sacramentality; that they were valid but ineffectual. He suggests that just as John's baptism points to Christ, so all sacraments point to the Catholic Church. This

²³ AU Jo, 6.13, 133; 'intendat caritas uestra; et quare designatum est nescio quid per columbam, ut baptizato domino ueniret columba, id est, spiritus sanctus in specie columbae, et maneret super eum, cum in aduentu columbae hoc cognosceret Iohannes, propriam quamdam potestatem in domino ad baptizandum? quia per hanc propriam potestatem, sicut dixi, pax ecclesiae firmata est. et potest fieri ut habeat aliquis baptismum praeter columbam; ut prosit ei baptismus praeter columbam, non potest'. (CCSL, 36: 60). See also AU Jo 5-6.

²⁴ AU Jo, 6.7, 127: 'illis uocibus ubi ait: tu ad me uenis [Mt 3,14] baptizari? ego a te debeo baptizari [Mt 3,14]'. (CCSL, 36: 57).

is rooted in the notion that sacraments are signs, not just of grace but of the unity within the body of Christ. Without unity, what they possess are those gifts that belong to Christ's friends. What they possess are not effective without belonging.

Let heretics, then, seek in the Catholic Church not what they possess but what they do not possess, that is, the end of the commandment, without which many holy things can be possessed but cannot be of benefit... Let them hasten to the unity and truth of the Catholic Church, not so they may possess the sacrament of washing, if they have already been washed by it, albeit in heresy, but so that they may possess it salvifically.²⁵

We now move to the attributes of John which Augustine displays as signs of fidelity to Christ as a friend of the Church. Through the figure of John, Augustine moves on to explore more thoroughly the features of what it means to be a true friend of God's *Verbum*. Unity brings about a radiance of God's grace which is displayed within the lives of his true friends. Here we explore in more detail those signs of friendship which flow from belonging to the bridegroom.

The Signs of Friendship

Through John's gospel, Augustine, who by that time of delivering his sermons as recorded in the *Tractatus*, was already very acquainted with the relevant passages which referred to John the Baptist as a unique and illustrative example of Christian discipleship. Several poignant themes stand out within the *Tractatus* as particularly expedient to Augustine's hermeneutical homiletics focused against the Donatists. The major themes are bound up with the notion of representing Christ as opposed to the Donatists who in claiming otherwise, nonetheless can only represent themselves and they have no share in him through his body. We have witnessed this through

²⁵ AU ba, 5.9 (WSA, I: 21), 507; 'non ergo quaerant in catholica haeretici quod habent sed quod non habent, id est finem praecepti, sine quo multa sancta haberi possunt, sed prodesse non possunt ... lauacri uero sacramentum non ut abeant, si iam eodem ipso quamuis in haeresi tincti sunt, sed ut salubriter habeant, ad catholicae unitatem ueritatemque festinent'. (CSEL, 51: 270).

Augustine's a call for the listeners to '*figurabat ecclesiam*'.²⁶ Nevertheless, in the figure of John, Augustine displays his notion of external signifiers of one's internal spiritual condition. They are: 1). Representing and Reflecting the Light of God. 2). Proclaiming the Word (*vox clamantis*) 3). Being a Witness to Christ in word and action to others. Each one of these needs further exploration.

John is presented as one who sheds light upon the people through being an illuminated minister of Christ: 'It was by that light that John the Baptist was enlightened'.²⁷ Augustine presents him, through the texts as one who bathes in the light of God and therefore is able to enlighten others. Yet before we delve into it, we need briefly to set the context of the presentation. Augustine begins his sermonising of John by confronting the audience with the opening phrase of John, '*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*' (Jn 1:1). Augustine prepares his listeners with what he hopes for them to be able to grasp the gravity of the subject: despite his concerns that some may not, 'will not deprive those who can grasp it, even though I fear it may be lost on those who cannot'.²⁸ This opening sentiment is also complimented by AU Ps 71:3, 'May the mountains receive peace for your people and the hills justice'.²⁹ These two passages become the backbone of displaying John as an illuminated friend which also transfers it to the present context of authentic *ecclesial* ministry. For Augustine, some, declare peace ('peace be with you', see above) and convincingly look like leaders, yet they do not represent Christ despite outward appearances. This notion of appearance chimes with Augustine's notion of an outer and inner life as well as the inner world of the soul in contrast to the outer world of the world. Nevertheless, in drawing on the Palam, which was read that day along with John's gospel, he presents the image of the mountain (*montes*) to illustrate ministerial leaders who within the Church stand under the light

²⁶ See, chapter 3, fn 40 & 41

²⁷ AU Jo, 1.18, 53; 'ab illo lumine illuminatus est Iohannes baptista'. (CCSL, 36: 10).

²⁸ AU Jo, 1.1, 39; 'a quibus possit non solum expositum capi, sed et antequam exponatur, intellegi; non fraudabo eos qui possunt capere'. (CCSL, 36: 1).

²⁹ AU Jo, 1.2, 40; 'suscipiant montes pacem populo tuo, et colles iustitiam'. (CCSL, 36: 1).

of its head (Christ) who casts his light through them onto the lower hills (*colles*) so that they may receive justice.³⁰ These lower ‘hills’ are the faithful who listen and receive the reflected light of the God’s grace.

‘Mountains are lofty souls’ and the hills are the ordinary souls of the faithful. Lesser souls, however, would not receive faith unless greater souls—called mountains—were enlightened by Wisdom herself, so that they might pass on to ordinary souls what these ordinary souls can grasp, and thus live from faith as hills because the mountains receive peace.³¹

Augustine then transfers these ‘lofty souls’ as the writers of the New Testament and of the illuminators of the faith into the present context. The ‘mountains’ within his day are Bishops, who can authentically declare peace, but not all, despite appearances are to be listened to or followed in error. Those that do not receive peace through the unity of the Church cannot declare it.

These same mountains say to the Church, “Peace be with you.” And, by proclaiming peace to the Church, these mountains did not separate themselves by acting against the one from whom they received peace; thus, could they proclaim peace honestly, rather than deceitfully.³²

The juxtaposition of the two kinds of mountains are insightful as all look the same and share a common appearance, yet some lead their listeners to life because they reside under the light of God. Others lead and have led their listeners to destruction because they do not reside in the Church’s unitive catholicity. The phrase, ‘Peace be with you’ is the common greeting of a Bishop and here Augustine draws this phrase into the discourse inferring that those outside of the Church appears to be what they are not:

³⁰ AU Jo, 1.2, 40; ‘sed ideo montes excipiunt pacem, ut colles possint excipere iustitiam’ (CCSL, 36: 1).

³¹ Ibid; ‘non autem exciperent minores animae fidem, nisi maiores animae, quae montes dictae sunt, ab ipsa sapientia illustrarentur, ut possint paruulis traicere quod possint paruuli capere, et uiuere ex fide colles, quia montes pacem suscipiunt’. (CCSL, 36: 1).

³² Ibid; ‘ab ipsis montibus dictum est ecclesiae: pax uobiscum. et ipsi montes pacem annuntiando ecclesiae, non diuiserunt se aduersus eum, a quo susceperunt pacem, ut ueraciter, non fecte nuntiarent pacem’. (CCSL, 36: 2).

Some mountains were like that, and they appeared to be great among men; they brought about heresies and schisms and divided the Church of God. But those that divided the Church of God were not the mountains of which it was said, May the mountains receive peace for your people (Ps 71:3). How, in fact, could those who divided unity have received peace?³³

Peace is a common theme for Augustine, as it indicates one who dwells within the unity of the Church and dwells within the life of God who bestows peace as a gift to his people. Like the light, only those who have received it themselves are able to convey it to others. In the most explicit passage from John's gospel concerning Christ conveying peace to the disciple (Jn 14:27), Augustine most commonly deploys it within the context of the Donatist Schism. A good example of this is: 'did you hear what Christ taught, 'my peace I leave you' (Jn 14:27). Donatus that heretic is not a disciple of Christ, for a disciple of Christ cannot be an enemy of peace'.³⁴ In terms of John as an example of Christian representation and illumination, Augustine, like John himself, points his listener to the source of the illumination, that is Christ: 'So then, our hope is to be placed in the one from whom the mountains receive', this sourcing of illumination centres back upon the opening line that the 'Word was God' and that from him the mountains received true peace. Augustine centres John the Baptist as a central mountain in representing true Christian discipleship and what a friend of the Church looks like through their actions which flows from their belonging. It is not from their appearance or proclamation: 'That other John, the Baptist, was also a mountain. He said, I am not the Christ (Jn 1:20), so that no one would fall away from the one who lights up the mountains by placing his hope in a mountain'.³⁵

³³ AU Jo, 1.3, 40-1; 'sic fuerunt quidam montes, et magni apparuerunt inter homines; et fecerunt haereses et schismata, et diuiserunt ecclesiam dei. sed isti qui diuiserunt ecclesiam dei, non erant illi montes, de quibus dictum est: suscipiant montes pacem populo tuo [Ps 71,3]. quomodo enim pacem susceperunt, qui unitatem diuiserunt?'. (CCSL, 36: 2).

³⁴ AU s, *Guelph*. 28,2, (trans, mine); 'audite Christus quid docet: pacem meam do uobis, pacem meam relinquo uobis [Jo 14,27]. non est Christi discipulus Donatista aut haereticus; non est Christi discipulus pacis inimicus'.

³⁵ AU Jo, 1.6, 43; 'mons erat et ille Iohannes baptista, qui dixit: non sum ego Christus [Jo 1,20]; ne quisquam spem in montem ponens'. (CCSL, 36: 3).

This notion of reflecting the uncreated light of God is a central motif to Augustine's theology of the reorientation of the Soul. He implores his listeners to, 'Lend your ears to me, your hearts to him' (AU Jo, 1.7). John is a figure of illumination from which the training of souls can learn what true *amicitia Dei* represents. This notion of transferring God's light gets an extended treatment on the passage, 'this man came as a witness, to bear witness to the light' (Jn 1:7). In tractate two Augustine draws this theme together into the figure of John in a far more dramatic fashion.

This John was someone great, of enormous worth, of great grace, a most lofty peak. Marvel, yes, wonder at him—but as a mountain. A mountain is in darkness unless it be mantled in light; therefore, marvel at John insofar as you listen to what follows, *That man was not the light* (Jn 1:8), lest, by seeing the mountain as light, you end up shipwrecked, not sheltered, by the mountain.³⁶

Augustine is clear, that a true ministry, faithful to the promises of Christ and to his Church, is an acceptance of subjecting one's self to the light of God's love and to seek his glory above the glory of the world. In this regard those who dwell within the light of God's truth and love are those who subject themes to the reflected light of God through those who represent him faithfully as members of his Church. He says, 'John too was a light, but not the true light' (AU Jo, 2.6). John is an example of one who basks in the light of God and confesses fidelity to Christ as its source: 'He turned his rays on John, who by confessing that he had been lit up by those rays and enlightened' (AU Jo, 2.7). He implores his listeners, through the trope of John, their lives could only bear the fruit of friendship if they remain under the head of the Church, Christ, who casts his light and life upon those who remain under the care of Catholic leaders.

³⁶ AU Jo, 2.5, 59; 'magnum aliquid iste Iohannes, ingens meritum, magna gratia, magna celsitudo! mirare, plane mirare, sed tamquam montem. mons autem in tenebris est, nisi luce uestiatur. ergo tantum mirare Iohannem, ut audias quod sequitur: non erat ille lumen [Jo 1,8]: ne cum montem putas lumen esse, naufragium in monte facias, non solatium inuenias.'. (CCSL, 36: 14).

Augustine also describes John as a *lucerna* (AU Jo, 2.8). The thrust of this entire hermeneutic of light, reflection and luminosity as well as personal illumination is centred upon proximity and dwelling under Christ: ‘raise yourself up to the one who lights up the mountain, which was itself raised up in order first to receive his rays, and then relay them to your eyes’.³⁷ Here the notion of being illuminated by the light of Christ. This receiving of Christ’s light is a call to receive within the Church the gift of Christ himself through the authentic administrators, Bishops. It is also a veiled invitation for the masses (*colles*) to present themselves before a Catholic Bishop (Augustine as their immediate *montes*) to receive what only those within Christ’s Church can themselves receive. It is a call for conformity, unity, and order within the matrix of Mother Church; from Mountain to molehill, all are to be *lucerna* of the one true *lumen*. From this effulgence of faith which comes from the Trinity, through saints and the Scripture shared in the sacraments within the body of belief, Augustine paints the picture of the Church as the landscape of a faith bathed in light. It is from this exposure to the revelation of God through the Church that inspires the second attribute of John as the exemplar of Catholic Christianity.

The second aspect of John’s example is that of proclaiming the Word (*Verbum*), being the voice (*vox*) of truth. This pours out from being one who is both illuminated and illuminator. It develops from the notion of being a reflector, an illuminated member through which the true light that enlightens everyone (Jn 1:9) shines through. Through the figure of John, Augustine is able to cement his key notion of one who faithfully proclaims Christ to the world—rather than himself to the world. This notion of being the audible utterance of the Word is key to Augustine’s notion of John as a *trope* of Christian witness by being faithful to Christ. For John is ‘*Ego vox clamantis in deserto*’ (Jn 1:23). In Joseph Lienhard’s essay he teases this notion out that John the Baptist in Augustine’s exegesis highlights this central theme. This relationship between John and Jesus is, in

³⁷ AU Jo, 2.5, 59; ‘montem tamquam montem. erige autem te ad illum, qui illuminat montem, qui ad hoc erectus est, ut prior radios excipiat, et oculis tuis nuntiet’. (CCSL, 36: 14).

Augustine presented as *vox* and *Verbum*, John being the voice of the Word, ‘*uocem se dixit. habes Ioannem uocem. quid habes Christum, nisi uerbum?*’.³⁸ This relates strongly to Augustine’s training in Rhetoric and that of the relationship between sounds as sign. As he expresses in *de doctrina christiana*, ‘Words, after all, are far and away the principal means used by human beings to signify the thoughts they have in their minds’.³⁹ Words are signs that signify meaning that convey thoughts to other minds. We see this in the *Tractatus*.

Then what is the use of saying these words out loud: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God?* While I was talking, I just said some words. Was what I just uttered the *Word that was with God?* The words I spoke sounded and ceased, did they not? Did God’s Word also make a sound and then come to an end? In that case, how were all things made through him, and without him was made nothing (Jn 1:3)? If the Word made noise and then stopped, how can what was created by it be regulated by it? What kind of Word can it be then, that is both spoken and does not come to an end?⁴⁰

The *vox* is a sign that conveys meaning which arises from the *verbum*—however, as words they are dependent upon the substance they signify and therefore are only signs which point people to things they represent. Therefore, *vox* deprived of *verbum* lacks *intellectus* (comprehension) and therefore has no substantive significance which empties words of meaning and reduces them to a mere ‘unintelligible noise’: ‘*ubi nullus est intellectus, inanis est strepitus*’.⁴¹ Without a rational signifier grounded in *verbum*, *vox* has no substantive *ratio* (rationality/reason):

³⁸ AU s, 288.2; (trans, mine), ‘He himself has a voice, John also has a voice, what Christ has is the Word’. (PL 38: 1305).

³⁹ AU do, 2.4 (WSA, I: 11), 134; ‘uerba enim prorsus inter homines obtinuerunt principatum significandi quaecumque animo concipiuntur’. (Simonetti, 78).

⁴⁰ AU Jo, 1.8, 44-5; ‘nam ecce quid prodest, quia sonuerunt uerba: in principio erat uerbum, et uerbum erat apud deum, et deus erat uerbum [Io 1,1]? et nos diximus uerba, cum loqueremur. numquid tale uerbum erat apud deum? nonne ea quae diximus, sonuerunt atque transierunt? ergo et dei uerbum sonuit et peractum est? quomodo omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil? quomodo per illud regitur, quod per illud creatum est, si sonuit et transiit? quale ergo uerbum quod et dicitur, et non transit?’. (CCSL, 36: 35-6).

⁴¹ AU s, 293.3, ‘uox Ioannes, dominus autem in principio erat uerbum [Io 1,1]. Ioannes uox ad tempus, Christus uerbum in principio aeternum. tolle uerbum, quid est uox? ubi

Look, there are two kinds, voice and Word. What is a voice? What is a word? What then? What you hear then is accepted and you respond by asking them kindly. If their word does not have a rational significance, they have said nothing. Their voice, however, is only a sound and an unintelligible noise, like a shout. It is as if not to speak. A voice is not made without saying a word.⁴²

As Lienhard succinctly captures and articulates it: ‘Hence every *verbum* is a *vox*, but not every *vox* is a *verbum*’.⁴³ The *verbum* is signified by sounds but is not a sound itself. What sounds represent is the *verbum*, the things conceived of in the heart (*cor*), retained in the memory (*memoria*), prepared by the will (*voluntas*) and reside in the intellect (*intellectus*). It is from this that sound issues forth in various languages to convey what is born in the heart as *verbum* expressed in *vox*, ‘*ecce uoluisti aliquid dicere: hoc ipsum quod uis dicere, iam corde conceptum est; tenetur memoria, paratur uoluntate, uiuit intellectus*’.⁴⁴ Augustine here builds upon the notion of signification. That John is an exemplar of Christian discipleship as one who is able to communicate the eternal *Verbum* through receiving the light of illumination and therefore has one’s inner life converted and conformed to the continuing revelation of the Word through the words of Scripture, via the illuminated minister. This has a twofold meaning in that it conveys kudos to Catholic Bishops, particularly in this context to Augustine and to those who ‘lend their hearts’ to Christ in order that their own ministry will bear fruit in assisting Augustine and other Catholic bishops to convert the populace to Catholic unity. Nevertheless, through John, Augustine encourages his listeners to first, lend him their ears to his *vox*, that they may receive the light of God’s eternally revealing *Verbum*.

nullus est intellectus, inanis est strepitus. uox sine uerbo aurem pulsatur, cor non aedificatur.’ (PL, 38: 1328).

⁴² AU s, 288.3 (trans, mine), ‘ecce duo quaedam, uox et uerbum. quid est uox? quid est uerbum? quid? audite quod in uobis ipsis approbetis, et uobis ipsis a uobismetipsis interrogati respondeatis. uerbum, si non habeat rationem significantem, uerbum non dicitur. uox autem, etsi tantummodo sonet, et irrationabiliter perstrepat, tanquam sonus clamantis, non loquentis, uox dici potest, uerbum dici non potest.’ (PL, 38: 1304).

⁴³ Lienhard (2001), 198-9.

⁴⁴ AU s, 288.3 (trans, mine), ‘Look, I wish to say something: and this is what I shall say, a word is conceived of in the heart, held in the memory, prepared by the will and lives in the intellect’. (PL, 38: 1304).

Servus Amicus Fieri Meruit

One of the central hallmarks of Augustine's exegesis of John the Baptist, is as a faithful witness who does not seek himself but rather lives only to serve Christ and to be a signifier of the true *signum*. Concerning John's ministry Augustine states: 'So then: *That man was not the light*. Why therefore did he come? *To bear witness to the light*. What was that for? *So that all might believe through him*. And to what light was he to bear witness? *To the true light* (Jn 1:9)'.⁴⁵ At the heart of the Christian life was to bear witness to Christ. Of course, this has ecclesial implications. Yet first we shall explore exactly what it is and why it is that Augustine sees as bearing witness by being enlightened. In this regard, Augustine follows Cyprian, in that you cannot give what you have not received (CY ep, 69.10).⁴⁶ John is one who has received the light of God because he stands in such proximity to the Son. John's life exemplifies one whose worldly endeavours are completely given over to the service of God (*servus Dei*). He is the epitome of abstinence and of faithful service, one who witnesses the grace he receives in both words (*vox*) and work (*opus*). As we have seen, John is the proclaimer of Christ, the *vox* to God's *verbum*. Yet, it is the witness of his entire life that the *Verbum* is also speaking through. John's life of abstinence in the service of God is an attractive vision for Augustine. It chimes with his own personal spiritual concerns as well as those for his congregation.

Augustine was fascinated with the heroic life of ascetics. As a Christian, men such as Anthony of Egypt. Of Anthony he would recall a conversation with a fellow African Ponticianus, who himself was clearly smitten with the desert saint. Augustine writes: 'he told us the story of Anthony the Egyptian monk, a name held in high honour among your servants... We were amazed as we heard of your wonderful acts very well attested and occurring so recently, almost in our own

⁴⁵ AU Jo, 2.5, 59; 'ergo: non erat ille lumen [Io 1,8]. 2,6 quare igitur uenit? sed ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine [Io 1,8]. utquid hoc? ut omnes crederent per illum [Io 1,7]. et de quo lumine testimonium perhiberet? Erat lux uera [Io 1,9]'. (CCSL, 36: 14).

⁴⁶ See, Ch 1, fn83.

time, done in the orthodox faith and in the Catholic Church.⁴⁷ In this regard, John the Baptist, as Augustine presents him, stands as an example of a contemporary Christian monk who embodies a selfless life of serving God. In this vision, Augustine puts forward and illustrates a Christian moral praxis (moral epistemology), a *trope* of a Christian psychagogy. He is everything Donatist ascetics are not. Of course, here the circumcellions are in mind as false ascetics and thus false Christians. They lack the true character of Christ, humility, because they do not reside in the Church of charity. Humility was a key indicator and a central concern for Augustine of a true and authentic Christian disciple, a key trait of Christian witness and servitude. This has long been recognised in the study of Augustine as the ‘touchstone of perfection’.⁴⁸ John stands as a model of both Christian faithfulness and humble servitude. He exemplifies for Augustine, one who dwells richly within the Spirit through the body of the Church:

From this Your Holinesses should be able to see that, if John humbled himself so far as to say, I am not worthy to untie his sandal strap, those who say, “We are the ones who baptize, what we give is ours, and what is ours is holy,” need to become humble. John says, “Not I, but he”; they say, “We.” John is not worthy to untie his sandal strap; even if he had said he was worthy to do that, how humble that would have been! Even if he had said he was worthy and had spoken like this: He is the one who is coming behind me, who has been put ahead of me, and I am only worthy to untie his sandal strap, he would have humbled himself greatly. But when he says that he is not even worthy to do that, he truly was full of the Holy Spirit; a servant who acknowledged his Lord like that, and so from being a servant deservedly became a friend.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ AU cf, 8.14, 142-3; ‘ortus est sermo ipso narrante de Antonio Aegyptio monacho, cuius nomen excellenter clarebat apud seruos tuos ... stupebamus autem audientes tam recenti memoria et prope nostris temporibus testatissima mirabilia tua [Ps 144,5] in fide recta et catholica ecclesia’. (CCSL, 27: 122). From this account, the life of St Anthony clearly had an enormous impact upon the ideals of a rigorist Catholic Christian life which he along with the friends as the *servus Dei* emulated.

⁴⁸ Van der Meer, (1961), 215

⁴⁹ AU Jo, 4.9, 93; ‘unde debet uidere sanctitas uestra, quia si Iohannes sic se humiliavit, ut diceret: non sum ego dignus corrigiam soluere [Io 1,27], quomodo habent humiliari, qui dicunt: nos baptizamus, nos quod damus nostrum est, et quod nostrum est, sanctum est. ille dicit: non ego, sed ille; illi dicunt: nos. non est dignus Iohannes soluere corrigiam calceamenti eius; quod si dignum se diceret, quam humilis esset? et si dignum se diceret, et sic diceret: ille uenit post me, qui ante me factus est, cuius tantummodo corrigiam calceamenti dignus sum soluere, multum se humiliasset. quando autem nec ad hoc dignum se dicit, uere plenus spiritu sancto erat, qui sic seruus dominum agnouit, et ex seruo amicus fieri meruit.’ (CCSL, 36: 35-6).

Humilitas is a fundamental aspect of authentic faith for Augustine, which runs through his entire theology.⁵⁰ It is the counterpoint to the cardinal sin of pride (*superbia*). Pride was seen as the ‘archetypal sin, the original sin from which all other sin proceeds as from a root’⁵¹. Humility was an essential feature of a life lived within the bond of the Spirit, the cardinal virtue of one who has received *caritas*, which indicates salvation: ‘because charity alone extinguishes sins’.⁵² It is the fundamental key in displaying an effective and salvific Christian life bathed in the grace and gifts of God bestowed upon his friends. To bathe in the light of God’s love is linked to his notion of the Church as the place of exposure to the Sun’s rays: ‘we possess him as salvation, we possess him as light’.⁵³ Within the *Tractatus*, Augustine never misses an opportunity to demonstrate this through the figure of John. Nevertheless, John’s illustration is one of representation, not of possession. This dovetails with Augustine’s entire theology of ministry and of salvation. Christ is the source of all that is good (*summum bonus*) which is why it is called grace: ‘Why is it called grace? Because it is given *gratis*’.⁵⁴ Yet this grace is dispensed through the gift of God which manifests itself in humility: ‘And this same humility is accommodated for us to receiving the grace of Christ, who is the supreme and singular example of humility’⁵⁵ John being the greatest of men is also for Augustine the prime example of the one who embodies and projects into the minds of the listeners a mental image of the humility of friendship by imitating the Christ of God. Humility for Augustine is the central condition by which the impulse for salvation arises in the hearts of human beings.

⁵⁰ See, Verwilghen (1986), 301-312.

⁵¹ Cavadini, (1999), 679.

⁵² AU 1 Jo, 1.6, 27; ‘quia sola caritas exstinguit delicta.’ (PL, 35: 1982).

⁵³ AU Jo, 2.13, 65; ‘nos illum possideamus sicut salutem, nos possideamus sicut lucem’. (CCSL, 36: 18).

⁵⁴ AU Jo, 3.8, 75; ‘unde uocatur gratia? quia gratis datur’. (CCSL, 36: 24).

⁵⁵ AU Gal, 25, (trans, mine), ‘et ipsa humilitas est accommodata percipiendae gratiae Christi, qui singulare humilitatis exemplum est.

‘the law made the proud sick and the sickness of the proud became the confession of the humble; now the sick confess that they are ill; let the doctor come and heal the sick.’⁵⁶

Augustine also constantly takes his listeners back to the foundations of his theological edifice, that the divinity of the Son on which the Church rests: ‘*quamuis mutabilia per uerbum fiant, ipsum incommutabile est*’.⁵⁷ Augustine’s overarching concern is that Christ is the foundation of all goodness, truth, beauty and being because it is forged by God, and therefore rests upon the nature of God. The ‘Word’ is God: ‘If Christ has changed, salvation too has changed; if salvation is only to be found in Christ, and Christ is the same now as then, salvation is the same for us now as it was then’. Therefore, greater even than the greatest man to be born of a woman, and like John, Augustine appeals to his hearers to direct their lives to Christ as John did. He calls his listeners to: ‘Look not at the minister but at the one preached. Is Christ being preached to you out of envy? Look at Christ, shun the envy. Do not imitate the bad man who is preaching, but the good man who is being preached to you.’ For Augustine, Christ is the only sure foundation and basis for faith, hope and love. For Augustine, Christ is the only fountain of truth and all in Christ have the same Teacher who dwells with, bonding one to another: ‘And so, my dearest friends, let me tell you what I think about the subject, without prejudice to anything better that you may have perceived. We all have one Master, after all, and we are fellow pupils in the same school’. Yet, this indwelling is a mirroring of Christ who is one with the Father within the bond of charity which is poured out onto the world. ‘inseparable charity, inseparable unity, inseparable majesty, inseparable authority, in line with these words which he laid down himself: I and the Father are one (Jn 10:30).’

Like everything else in Augustine’s theology, the efficacy of the Christian life as witness is curtailed by its prior involvement and participation in Christ. *Humilitas* is no different. Linked in with his notion of John being a ‘mountain’, ‘lamp’ or ‘light’ of Christ and representing and

⁵⁶ AU Jo. 3.2.

⁵⁷ AU Jo, 1.11.

reflecting him as well as proclaiming the *Verbum*, humility comes from the one who is humility itself. Augustine in repeating the opening lines in John, *In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum* coupled with *Et Verbum caro factum est*, cements the kernel of Christ's displayed *humilitas*. Augustine will remind his listeners that this is the epicentre of God's humble character. He will constantly remind his listeners of the humility of Christ, particularly in reference to the cross: 'John said, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. They saw this, and in order to reach what they were seeing from a long way off, they did not let go of the cross of Christ and did not disdain the humility of Christ'.⁵⁸ It is the display of the humility of Christ, which pours out of the incarnation, for 'the Word was made flesh stuns us' which is the glory he displays.⁵⁹ It is this, that through humility God's power and glory is seen by the eyes of the hearts that have been cleansed through grace: 'by his very birth he made an ointment with which the eyes of our hearts could be cleaned, that we might see his majesty through his humility'.⁶⁰ God's self-humiliation is the source of the healing of humanity's pride (*superbia*). without the incarnation from which all divine activity pours forth, humanity is lost because it can only be cured of pride through the humility of God's grace (AU s, 160).

In terms of John the Baptist as a witness, which is inferred to his listeners, that it is in the denial of one's self and of the healing of human pride, salvation is signified through the efficacy of their Christian life. John for Augustine is great for this reason, that he denied himself and chose to proclaim the truth rather than himself: 'John, in fact, was such an outstanding figure, that people could believe that he was the Christ; and it was proof of his humility that he said he was

⁵⁸ AU Jo, 2.3, 57; 'nam uidens Iohannes dicebat: in principio erat uerbum, et uerbum erat apud deum, et deus erat uerbum [Io 1,1]. uiderunt hos, et ut eruenirent ad id quod uidebant de longe, a cruce Christi non recesserunt, et humilitatem Christi non contemserunt.' (CCSL, 36: 13). See also, AU Jo, 2.4.

⁵⁹ AU Jo, 3.15.

⁶⁰ AU Jo, 2.16, 66; 'ipsa natiuitate collyrium fecit, unde tergerentur oculi cordis nostri, et possemus uidere maiestatem eius per eius humilitatem.' (CCSL, 36: 19). See also, AU Jo, 3.1.

not'.⁶¹ This notion of self-denial is augmented in Augustine's presentation of John who could have claimed to be that which he was not. This for Augustine is the ultimate test of character in that despite the temptation for self-promotion, he chose rather to proclaim.

Anyone who has imitated the humility of the herald, and recognized the high dignity of the judge. Nothing, you see, is more humble than this herald. My brothers and sisters, John had no greater merit than this humility, such that when he was in a position to deceive people, and to be taken for the Christ, and to be regarded as the Christ (so great was his grace and so excellent his renown), he still admitted openly and said, I am not the Christ.⁶²

This is the greatest sign that one is becoming an *amicus sponsi*, to seek the good of your friend, Christ by self-denial. For in seeking one's self you are declaring that you are no friend of Christ, nor even of one's self.

Contrary to resting upon, and as we shall see, resting within the gift of God is humanity's desire to claim that salvation comes through the self. For Augustine, this is deeply embedded within his notion of faith and what it means to dwell within the body of the saved—the Church. As Cavadini's pithy statements observes: 'The proud ascribe the victory over sin to themselves'.⁶³ This has a universal application to those who are both Christian and non-Christian. Yet it is indicative to Christian's who claim the name Christian but not the Christ. Augustine refers to the pride of the Manicheans who disdain the incarnation and cross of Jesus and therefore remain in pride (AU s, *Dolbeau* 21=159B.12). Philosophers remain in pride for similar reasons as they reject the material as having value and therefore the incarnation and cross remain a substantial barrier to accepting the truth of faith. They aim for the same goals, but are denied the destination because

⁶¹ AU Jo, 4.3, 87; 'tanta autem excellentia erat in Iohanne, ut posset credi Christus; et in eo probata est humilitas eius, quia dixit se non esse'. (CCSL, 36: 32).

⁶² AU Jo, 4.6, 90; 'qui imitatus fuerit humilitatem praeconis, et cognouerit celsitudinem iudicis. nihil enim humiliter ipso praecone. fratres mei, nullum tantum meritum Iohannes habuit quam de ista humilitate, quod cum posset fallere homines, et putari Christus, et haberi pro Christo - tantae enim gratiae tantaeque excellentiae fuit -, confessus est tamen aperte, et dixit: non sum ego Christus'. (CCSL, 36: 34).

⁶³ Calvadini (1999), 683.

they remain prideful in their own efforts (AU tri, 4.20, see also, AU s, 174.3) which we see in the *Tractatus*:

They (Philosophers) were able to see that which is, but from a long way off; they refused to hold onto the humility of Christ, the boat in which they would safely reach what they were able to see from along way off; and they were disgusted by the cross of Christ. The sea has to be crossed, and you disdain the cross? O proud wisdom!.⁶⁴

For Augustine, those who seek to ascribe salvation to themselves, who wish to wallow in the praise of humanity and that of self-centred praise, rather than resting upon the one who gives freely out of his abundant grace are left stranded. Of course, the Donatist within this context are front and centre in Augustine's hermeneutic of humility.

Audi Amicum Sponsi

Throughout this work we have seen the importance of listening as a tool of both drawing his audience into the text and as a theological signifier of spiritual health. The notion of listening is very much linked to the performative praxis of preaching and as an invitation to engage with what is being revealed amid the gathering. As Scanlon states, the priority of speech is not merely functional but an act of salvific engagement, 'The semantic/pragmatic finality of this speech praxis is ultimately salvation and, in the meantime, the making of disciples'.⁶⁵ Ancient cultures were communities of orality. It is therefore no surprise that in this sense Orators were highly sought after as ecclesial communicators, 'sacred orators'.⁶⁶ Words for Augustine were the paints with

⁶⁴ AU Jo, 2.4, 58; 'illud potuerunt uidere quod est, sed uiderunt de longe. noluerunt tenere humilitatem Christi, in qua nauis securi peruenirent ad id quod longe uidere potuerunt; et sorduit eis crux Christi. mare transeundum est, et lignum contemnis? o sapientia superba!'. (CCSL, 36: 13).

⁶⁵ See above.

⁶⁶ See, Harrison, (2013), 47-49. See also, Cameron, (1991), 120-154. For the influence of his secular training upon his presentation of scripture see Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis* (2012).

which he presented his art—and that was the power to persuade. Yet on the receiving end were the listeners themselves—receptacles of the *vox*, through which they participated afresh within the *Verbum*. At the heart of Augustine’s polemic was a desire to train them to hear and be moved, through their ears he offered them to open their hearts to God. ‘The voice which you heard in the lamentations in the psalm is clearly the voice of his people, the voice of the servant, and you were moved when you heard it, because you belong to that people’.⁶⁷ Augustine understands the value of friendship—indeed to him nothing was more satisfying or salvific. To be friends with God was within the scheme of things a prize beyond price, the pearl, worth of the sale of everything else (Mt 13:45-6).⁶⁸ Here we see Augustine’s emotional appeal to his listeners. Augustine understood that arguments are won over the cultivation of the heart. I very much lie at the root of his own story. On this point Harrison notes: ‘not in terms of how to teach a particular fact or truth, but how to present it so that it arouses the emotions and passions of the hearer and thereby moves or persuades them to act upon it’.⁶⁹ In many ways this aspect pushes at the most instructive and assertive stance in relation to his presentation of John as a *typus*, a *trope* of a faithful Catholic Christian.

In this calling Augustine brings together all that has been said and lays it at the listeners feet. By listening Augustine does not merely mean the auditory aspect of John’s words, his voice, he implied a modelling upon his whole life. his life is about self-denial, representation (*figurabat ecclesiam*), it concerns being a witness in proclamation and praxis. It is about being faithful to the gifts of God intended for his friends, the sacraments. It is about belonging to the bride: ‘For her he is jealous, for he is the bridegroom’s friend; for her he is jealous, not for himself’ (AU cf, 13.14).

⁶⁷ AU Jo, 10.7, 204.

⁶⁸ Augustine only quotes this parable once throughout his entire work. The only time he does is in relation to love and that of the Holy Spirit: AU s, 212.1; ‘societas est mercium spiritualium ut similes sitis negotiatoribus bonam margaritam quaerentibus [Mt 13,45]. haec erit caritas quae diffundetur in cordibus uestris per spiritum sanctum’. (SC, 116: 174).

⁶⁹ Harrison (2013), 41.

Those who do not, abandon even themselves (*et suam uolentes constituere, iustitiae dei non sunt subiecti*) (AU s, 160.1).

As we have seen, Augustine has clearly presented himself within the line of authorised witnesses as true friends of Christ as opposed to the false ministers. Moses, John and all Catholic Bishops for Augustine stand within a line of authentic ministry as they look after the interest of the bride rather than themselves (See Sherwin). Nevertheless, as I have stated, this does not preclude the ‘hills’ from receiving what the mountains have reflected upon them. Augustine in this enfranchises the masses to become what those who minister to them are—friends of Christ. They are to be what John illustrated, but most of all, they are to be faithful to the bride if they truly belong to the bridegroom. Only those who are faithful to the bridegroom has the bride as their saviour and friends. Those who seek Christ within his Church and call others to do the same are servants who are also friends (AU Jo, 5.19). We see this broader vision of friendship when Augustine states:

So then, the friend of the bridegroom stands and listens to him. Why does he stand? Because he does not fall. Why does he not fall? Because he is humble. Observe him standing on a solid foundation: I am not worthy to untie his sandal straps (Jn 1:27). You are right to humble yourself; rightly you do not fall, rightly you stand, rightly you listen to him and rejoice with joy at his voice. In the same way the apostle too is a friend of the bridegroom, he too is ardent, not on his own behalf but on behalf of the bridegroom. Listen to the voice of his zeal: I am jealous for you with God’s jealousy (2 Co 11:2-3), he said. “It is not mine, it is not on my behalf, but it is with God’s jealousy.” Why? How so? Whom are you jealous for, or rather on whose behalf are you jealous?⁷⁰

⁷⁰ AU Jo, 13.12, 253; ‘ergo amicus sponsi stat et audit eum. quare stat? quia non cadit. quare non cadit? quia humilis est. uide stantem in solido: non sum dignus corrigiam calceamenti eius soluere [Io 1,27]. bene te humilias, merito non cadis, merito stas, merito audis eum, et gaudio gaudes propter uocem sponsi. sic et apostolus amicus sponsi, zelat et ipse, non sibi, sed sponso. audi uocem zelantis: zelo dei uos zelo [2 Cor 11,2], dixit; non meo, non mihi, sed zelo dei. unde? quomodo? quam zelas, uel cui zelas? desponsau enim uos uni uiro, uirginem castam exhibere Christo [2 Cor 11,2]. quid ergo times? quare zelas? timeo, inquit, ne sicut serpens seduxit Euam astutia sua, sic et uestri sensus corrumpantur a castitate quae est in Christo [2 Cor 11,3]’. (CCSL, 36: 137).

Standing was a loaded phrase also for Augustine. One stood upon truth and in the Basilicas literally upon the floor in which they listened intensely as if Christ were saying it (*audiuimus et cantauimus, et euangelicam lectionem intentissime accepimus*, AU s, 302.1). Van de Meer paints a vivid picture of the proceedings. After the initial greeting: ‘The Lord be with you. And with thy spirit’ the Epistle would have been read by a boy (AU ep, 53.3) as all looked upon Augustine and the clergy in the apse. After the readings the peoples ‘presses ever more closely against the steps of the apse’.⁷¹ It is worth noting at this point that Augustine would have stood at the reading of the Gospel and so would have stood himself and listened as the Deacon read the passage handed to him by the lector. Only to preach would he have sat down in his *cathedra*, standing only to make certain points which would have ended by him standing for the final words which are ‘hurled into the nave’⁷² The crowd which ‘has grown stiff from standing’⁷³ relax.

In many ways this reflects his notion of being a ‘mountain’ who receives with understanding the truth as a friend of Christ. Nevertheless, while Augustine was preaching to them, he would have been seated in his chair (*cathedra*) and those standing would have been his listeners, the humble hills. Here the arrangements would not have been unnoticed. The listeners are standing and listening because they are friends of the bridegroom, they too are Christ’s humble servants who are also called into friendship with him by being within the performative liturgical life. They are present to God within Christ himself. They are his friends on earth as the saints are in heaven.

Nevertheless, the listening is a call to *audio*, to hear as Christ’s friends. The standing is also significant as it means being present to the salvific drama of the worship. There is a direct correlation between those who stand within and those who refuse to. Buildings in the Ancient world meant something. Between Donatists and Catholics, property was violently fought over and

⁷¹ Van Der Meer (1961), 391.

⁷² Ibid, 397.

⁷³ Ibid.

protected, as the buildings embodied a claim to authenticity. As noted above (chapter 1), Augustine by this time (406) had taken possession of the Donatist Basilica around the corner as a result of the Edict of Unity (405).⁷⁴ Yet, the Donatists present who had come over to the unity of the Catholic Church also would have known those who had not. To stand in a building and worship said much about one's inner commitments. We see this in the story of Victorinus' conversion. In professing his faith to his friends in secret, Augustine tells us:

After examining them he (Victorinus) said to Simplicianus, not openly but in the privacy of friendship, 'Did you know that I am already a Christian?' Simplicianus replied: 'I shall not believe that or count you among the Christians unless I see you in the Church of Christ.' Victorinus laughed and said: 'Then do walls make Christians?'... Suddenly and unexpectedly he said to Simplicianus (as he told me): 'Let us go to the Church; I want to become a Christian.' Simplicianus was unable to contain himself for joy and went with him.⁷⁵

Buildings meant something in the age of Augustine, even more so since the acceptance and Imperial support for the Church.⁷⁶ This would have been well known to those standing and listening. Standing, and where one stood had spiritual connotations. Those who had come into the unity of the Catholic Church, would have felt a discomfort in just being there to begin with. His call to listen was emotional, standing pastoral—yet together they made for a powerful and persuasive message to become friends with Christ as with one another. Standing beside each other within the building as an act of unity itself. Augustine does not let this particular nature of the gathering to go un-spiritualised. Standing in humble submission, to listen and to hear the *Verbum*

⁷⁴ Augustine records that after the dissolution of the Donatists in Hippo and the confiscation of their Basilica he posted upon the walls a brief refutation of their cause: *probationum et testimoniorum contra Donatistas*. AU re, 2.27. (CCSL, 52: 112).

⁷⁵ AU cf, 8.4, 136; 'perscrutabatur et dicebat Simpliciano non palam, sed secretius et amiliarius: noueris me iam esse christianum. et respondebat ille: non credam nec deputabo te inter christianos, nisi in ecclesia Christi idero. ille autem inridebat dicens: ergo parietes faciunt christianos?... subitoque et inopinatus ait Simpliciano, ut ipse narrabat: eamus in ecclesiam: christianus uolo fieri. at ille non se capiens laetitia perrexit cum eo'. (CCSL, 27: 116).

⁷⁶ see Müller (2012), 302-3. Also, see n66, 189?

through Augustine's *vox* was the imperative. Nevertheless, to stand in the faith meant also to stand in the truth of Christ within his Church. Standing in the *humilitas* of Christ within his Church was not unconnected with literally standing before the Catholic Bishop to listen.

So if pride has driven out those who were unable to stand, humility brings back within all those who will be able to stand for ever. That is why the one who said, *The bones that have been humbled shall exult*, said just before, *To my hearing you will give exultation and rejoicing* (Ps 50:8). What is the meaning of *to my hearing*? Hearing you makes me glad, your voice makes me glad; drinking inside makes me glad. That is why I do not fall, that is why *the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice*; that is why *the friend of the bridegroom stands and listens to him* (Jn 3:29). The reason he is standing is because he is listening. He is drinking from the inner fountain, that is why he is standing. Those who have not wished to drink from the inner fountain, *they fell, they were driven out, nor were they able to stand.*⁷⁷

Thus, Augustine within the line of authentically ordained ministers, display themselves as faithful to God's *Verbum*, seeking only so serve Christ of who those who belong to him he calls friends. Nevertheless, this notion of 'standing and listening' clearly applies to the entire membership of the Catholic Church as, by being present, so stand and listen with Augustine the Holy Scriptures being read is an act of friendship. To sit at the feet of Christ and to be a learner of his (disciple) is an act of fidelity to his body when doing so in the presence of an authorised minister amongst the faithful of God. The Donatists have the sacraments, just as they do the Scripture, but outside of the body of Christ, they are ineffective and thus they are spiritually lifeless. They cannot hear the *Verbum*, because they do not reside within Christ amongst his friends. Just as the sacraments amongst them are valid but ineffective so too are the Scriptures, because they cannot rejoice in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit because they are not listening to the bridegroom

⁷⁷ AU Jo, 25.17, 447; 'si ergo superbia expulit eos qui non potuerunt stare, humilitas intromittit, qui possint in perpetuum stare. ideo etenim ille qui dixit: exsultabunt ossa humiliata [Ps 50,10], praedixit: auditui meo dabis exultationem et laetitiam [Ps 50,10]. quid est: auditui meo [Ps 50,10]? audiendo te felix sum, de uoce tua felix sum; intus bibendo felix sum. ideo non cado, ideo exsultabunt ossa humiliata [Ps 50,10]; ideo amicus sponsi stat, et audit eum [Io 3,29]; ideo stat, quia audit. de interiore fonte bibit, ideo stat. illi qui noluerunt de interiore bibere, ibi ceciderunt, expulsi sunt, nec potuerunt stare [Ps 35,13]. (CCSL, 36: 258).

and therefore do not have the bride. That is to say, that beyond the bounds of unity they cannot hear the *Verbum* through the authority of the minister because they do not dwell within the Spirit which illuminates the darkened soul. Beyond the bridegroom, there is no bride in which to embrace.

Disciples of Donatus

All that has been said is against the backdrop of Donatus and his disciples. In highlighting what a faithful Catholic looks like as we have seen in the previous chapter and here in John, Augustine is saying what they are not. At every point, by stating what John is, he is also saying what Donatists are not. Many would be standing and listening together (see chapter 4) with different perspectives on what Augustine means. Amongst the crowd were converted *circumcellions*, who would have found a profound resonance with the example Augustine presents through John. Indeed, the rancorous history which would have been experienced and passed on from one generation after another would have found fertile ground in which to take root within the minds of those present. After the Edict was issued (405) due to violence against the Bishop of Bagai,⁷⁸ Augustine's polemic of the Christian as presented through his hermeneutic of friendship would have been a vivid counter image of the fruits of Christian virtue. None of which Augustine is clear to point out comes from belonging to the sect of the Donatists. At the root of his hermeneutic of friendship lies the Church upon which the Trinity upholds.

Augustine is clear that the lack of faithful representation of Christ, of reflecting and illuminating others in the Christian life, stems from their self-imposed alienation from Christ himself. At the heart of this is the clear inference that Donatists, and in particular the minority yet illustrative *circumcellions* lack humility, because they are outside of the bonds of the Holy Spirit which

⁷⁸ See chapter 1, fn2.

alone extinguishes pride. Thus, their lack of *humilitas* along with their failure to represent Christ are key *signa* of temporal desires in securing their own Church, rather than seeking unity within the one Church. Deeply nestled within this polemic for Augustine, would be Primian and Optatus of Thamugadi as examples of Donatists perceived propensity for self-servitude, prideful vanity, and worldly ambition.⁷⁹ This would have had a profound impact upon those who had previously been within the Donatist fold as they would have been very familiar with the Maxentius schism and the heavy handedness of Donatists Bishops. Though claiming to be the pure and the true Church in Africa, Augustine is presenting an image of them as contrary to that claim in both word and deed. Their lives display what it is they were, no friends of Christ because they do not have the bridegroom.

Without belonging to the bridegroom, a truly salvific and efficacious Christian life is impossible, as it is founded upon one's self and others, not upon the Trinity which forges its unity and consolidates it within himself. Here there is a notion pertaining to the death of Augustine's Manichean friend in Thagaste. Friendship founded upon or invested in mortal and transient things are themselves open to destruction as they are extinguished upon their expiration. Donatists are friends of themselves, their unity is founded upon their own temporal natures. They are Christians without a future hope, those whose faith is a phantom, vanishing and insubstantial. They are in

⁷⁹ Both Primian and Optatus of Thamugadi met their ends along with Gildo (398) in the Crushing of the revolt. Primian was a man of 'extreme views' and Optatus prone to vanity and illicit greed. See Chapter 1, 62-64.

communion with their love of the world, their virgins⁸⁰ and Martyrs⁸¹ are empty gestures and their proclamation of Christ empty and in vain. Those who belong to the sect of the Donatists are no friends of Christ, they are only friends of their founder: 'because if you suffer for Donatus, you are suffering for a proud man; you are not in the dove if you are suffering for Donatus. That man was no friend of the bridegroom'.⁸²

Being Friends

Through the figure of John the Baptist, Augustine displays his notion of Christian friendship and that of it being founded upon the *Ecclesia Catholica*. What Augustine is doing is displaying the fruit of friendship through the trope of John as an illustration of what true friendship looks like and what it leads to. The semiotic nature of John as an illustration is poignant. Through the figure of John, Augustine displays the features of true ecclesial friendship. The one who rejoices at the voice of the bridegroom is the bride, through the *vox* of the Church the *Verbum* of the bridegroom is rejoiced over because of the friendship shared between the bridegroom and his friends. Only through the *vox* of the friends of Christ can one hear and act upon the call to love.

⁸⁰ AU Jo, 13.13, 254; "The heretics too have virgins, there are many virgins among the heretics. Let us see if they love the bridegroom, in such a way as to safeguard this virginity. Whom is it being kept safe for? "For Christ," she says. Let us see if it is for Christ, not for Donatus. Let us see whom this virginity is being kept safe for; you will be able to test it quickly enough. Look, I am showing you the bridegroom, because he is showing you himself. John bears witness to him: This is the one who baptizes. O virgin, if you are keeping your virginity safe for this bridegroom, why do you go running off to the one who says, "I am the one who baptizes," when your bridegroom's friend says, This is the one who baptizes?". 254-5.

⁸¹ AU Jo, 6.23, 142; "Those martyrs who suffered in the time of persecution did this sort of thing with charity, but these people³² do it all puffed up with pride, because when there is no longer any persecutor around, they throw themselves over cliffs. So then come, in order to have charity." "But we are the ones who have martyrs." "What martyrs? They are not doves; that is why they have attempted to fly and have fallen from the rock.". 142. See also, AU Jo, 11.15.

⁸² AU Jo, 6.23 (see above).

This action is signified by the fruits of being a friend. The central feature is humility, this is the sign of the Spirit and displays what one loves. Those outside the Church cannot be humble because like all those who are trying to save themselves, they are full of pride. If they dwell within the unity of the Church their humility would be displayed because they become exposed to the salvific indwelling of God. They would reflect God's glory, being lamps of the of true lamp. They would illuminate others just as they have been illuminated. Their proclamation would be genuine and would not be about themselves. They would be able to deny themselves rather than claim credit for what God has done. Their efforts to suffer and deny themselves would be acceptable along with their sacraments as they would be done for the honour of Christ by belonging to his body. They would be able to live in peace as they dwell within the Spirit which safeguards it and secures the peace which flows from its unity. They would be *amicus sponsi*, friends of Christ. Augustine, through John, implores them, remain in the Church, listen and learn, be bound from above—belong to the bride.

Summary

In this chapter we have explored Augustine's hermeneutic of John within the *Tractatus*. Through the figure of John the Baptist, Augustine defines the features of friendship with Christ by weaving the biblical narrative within the context of Church ecclesiology. He highlights these features in terms of representation. True friends of Christ, like that of John, represent the interest of God not themselves. They stand in close proximity to Christ and reflect to others the illuminating light of Christ that has entered the world and remains within the Church—the bride of Christ. Those who dwell within the unity of the Church proclaim him in word and deed. Those beyond its bounds, despite their claims represent themselves as they cannot give what they do not possess—Christ. Through the figure of John, Augustine demonstrates the most significant virtue, that of humility. For it signals that one dwells within the unity of the Trinity of which the Church

is founded upon. Those who do not possess humility are filled with pride and have yet to submit themselves to the humility of the Church which Christ's entire life exemplifies. Those who belong to Christ rejoice in his body and receive the peace of unity and the fruit of Christ, humility. Augustine's hermeneutic of John is a hermeneutic of friendship in which he calls those who stand before him, both Catholics and Donatists to invest their lives within the Church, just like John did in the mission of God and of Christ the incarnate *Verbum*. The life of John as an *amicus sponsi* is Augustine's call to those present to be *religare* to Christ, to call others to belong, be bound—be friends.

Conclusion

My hope is that by now my argument has been both sufficiently demonstrated and compelling. We have sojourned through both the context and the texts of the *Tractatus*. Nevertheless, it has been important to trace Augustine's developing thought and grammar as well as to outline the context of his arriving before the witness of John the evangelist through which he delivers his most developed vision of friendship as *ecclesial* indwelling. For him it remained a central feature of being wedded to the befriending bridegroom by belonging to the bride—the body of Christ. We have seen how through the Church, Augustine understands the *ecclesial* mechanism by which through its trinitarian foundation, brings to birth God's friends through the body of his Son on earth. Friendship for Augustine marks the summit of divine *caritas* as achieved as friendship. Christ was where the human heart finds its rest. The binding however was contingent upon the nature of its forging. In this sense, it can be forged in cupidity and thus can become a viper's pit of destruction.¹ Or forged in *caritas* and thus become a binding between *anima* that has a beneficial quality (AU 4.7).² For what greater *caritas* was there but the Spirit of God who is *caritas* itself? Of course, this, as well as all language concerning friendship remained conditioned by Cicero's maxim³ which becomes baptised within his 'Pro-Nicene' trinitarian ecclesiology. This maxim finds its fulfilment within this matrix in which its highest manifestation rests upon the Catholic Church that remains the body of Christ (*totus Christus*). This notion of *caritas* becomes cemented within a pneumatological focus upon the role of the Holy Spirit through which true friendship is forged in its highest manifestation.⁴ The Trinity, through the Church, becomes the means by which love reaches its true ends by bringing to birth true friendships which remain

¹ AU cf, 2.2. See, 107.

² See, 80.

³ Cicero, *Amic.* 20 (6) (See, n60, 103).

⁴ See, 126-150.

forever. Nevertheless, let us retrace our steps in our journey with Augustine towards this final frontier of friendship.

In between two major events the tractates were delivered. The Edict of Unity (405) and the conference of Carthage (411). These two dates embrace Augustine's preaching on the gospel of John. Nevertheless, with the issuing of the Edict of Unity, the starting gun had been fired which gave huge hope to the Catholic resolution of the Donatist schism in North Africa. From just after the epicentre of the schism itself (311), Constantine had assumed power in the West and through a policy of toleration (313) and of alignment, Donatists found themselves on the wrong side of Empire. This in many ways, was where they had intended to remain, though not in an atmosphere of renewed oppression. Through the interests of an Empire requiring unity and solidarity, Donatism was never going to find much Imperial support. Donatists knew this, which is why they demanded Gallic bishops at the start of the investigative panel. It proved futile.

As noted above, by the time Augustine enters the fray (393), Donatism had been robbed of its stable leadership and political nous. Its nostalgic and romantic mindset of the past prevented them from moving forwards into the new *modus acceptio*. From the very inception of the Schism, the relationship with those who would claim universal Catholicity was rancorous, intractable, and immutably affixed within the identity of the divided Church. Violence and slander were common features of the sectarian *societatis*. By the time Augustine delivers the first homilies on John, the debate about Donatism was at an end. The Edict had delivered the decisive blow and had declared the Emperor's continued commitment to the Catholic cause. Augustine understood the limits of force and of its ability to fester and erupt at unsuspecting times. He understood that what heals wounds and causes unity to remain was at the root of what both parties called to be as Christians, to be faithful followers of Christ.

In many ways, the theme of friendship emerges as Augustine's secret weapon, an incentive all would have known, understood and desired, yet few would have considered it in relation to the

Church and more incredulously, with God. Both parties claimed to be representing Christ and looking after the interest of their saviour on earth. It is a mark of Augustine's genius that he understands that force must become something more substantial in arresting the hearts of human beings, if there was to be a final reckoning between the two groups. There were several ways in which Augustine approached this. He sought to demonstrate that though they are Catholics, they are justified in their positions 1) That though they are aligned to the Empire, they are not *of* the Empire. 2) That the claim to being 'Catholic' must mean universal (καθ' ὅλον). 3) That the Church and its validity is founded upon Christ *not* upon human claims or efforts. 4) That without belonging, the claim to be Christian is empty and erroneous. The notion of friendship as an ecclesial feature embraces all that this strategy entails. Augustine understood from his own experience that there were more than mere details to be overcome or even points to be made. To convert, to be persuaded (*persuadere*)⁵ comes via love, it was a matter of the heart. It is a matter of love and love has no greater power than when it rests in friendship. First, let us recap the development of Augustine's notion of friendship and how it becomes a central theme through which he calls for the unity of the Church in Africa.

Augustine himself, as recorded in his own biography the *Confessions*, that nothing was more valuable in life than loving friends (*habuissent fideliter ac dilexissent amicos*) within mutually reciprocal exchange of soul with soul, '*quatenus est luminosus limes amicitiae*'.⁶ In other great works he will reiterate the point: 'what greater consolation do we have in this human society, riddled with errors and anxieties, than the unfeigned faith and mutual love of true and good friends?'.⁷ Nothing was more essential or satisfying than the loving embrace of another through friendship. Nevertheless, he recognised that friendship, being that summit of love's achievement was

⁵ Augustine will commonly frame his notion of conversion within the rhetorical grammar of persuasion, '*persuadere*'. For Example, AU Ac, 1.2; AU rel, 6.

⁶ AU cf, 6.21; 2.2.

⁷ AU ci, 19.8 (See, n6, 13).

contingent upon the nature of its union. In the end, he came to the position that the most perfect immersion into love's journey, rested in membership of the Church. Nevertheless, Augustine's own journey to this point was a series of steps which come together at the end of his life in himself and the beginning of his new life in Christ through the waters of rebirth within the womb of wisdom, the matrix of the Church. His journey echoes the wayfaring of many in the development of thought and praxis. We see Augustine's primitive notions of friendship as, what in classical terms would be considered as 'accidental', based upon the utility of self-promotion and pride. The further step was in the encounter of the classical curriculum under the *grammatici* which furnished his reflective self with the wisdom of key writers as well as providing the environment for a greater reliance upon friends rather than family for his inner nourishment. Yet, his desire for love was unrestrained and unrefined. His mind was awash with pleasure, yet nothing began to please him more than being with his friends: 'no restraint was imposed by the exchange of mind with mind (*animo usque ad animum*), which marks the brightly lit pathway of friendship'.⁸ By this time, friendship had become a central feature of his inner life. By the time he goes to university in Carthage and encounters Cicero, the notion of friendship and friends was securely fixed as an essential nexus of his life.

His subsequent steps bring about two major features of Augustine's developing notion of friends and friendship. Firstly, he finds Cicero, who through his writings becomes acquainted with the philosophical furniture of classical friendship as well as becoming affixed within the notion of a sharing within one another's essential being (the phrase above echoes this). Friendship thus through the writings of Cicero becomes refined and distilled into a small group of likeminded students who centre their 'exchange' upon 'agreement' and loving benevolence. Cicero's maxim resides within Augustine's mental framework of friendship all his life. In many ways it provides, within a single statement, everything prescribed for the forging of friends: '*Est enim amicitia nihil*

⁸ AU cf, 2.2 (see, n14, 85).

aliud nisi omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio'.⁹ What changes, is what friendship is centred upon and the central doctrines which govern its 'agreement' coupled with the nature of the love which binds it with others. It cannot be overstated how important Cicero's contribution to Augustine's formation of friendship is. It is through the writings of Cicero that Augustine encounters and secures his maxim as his own. It is also through Cicero that Augustine is exposed to the philosophical thought and grammar of the development and history of its evolution.

The second feature that Augustine encounters at this time, is the notion of religious affiliation. This was a relatively new development for Augustine, as all previous religious imbibements had come from a cultural context. His mother, as we know, was a pious Catholic. Yet, it wasn't until Augustine had begun his studies at Carthage that he began to engage on a personal level with the notion of religious thought and identity. During this time, he re-engaged with the faith of his background and found it wanting. The Bible seemed to him *indigna*, unworthy of his attention in comparison to Cicero and the classics. This marks a turning point in that it is here we see Augustine take the initiative in pursuing a worldview in which he could rest his *animus* and the *anima* of his friends. Augustine, in rejecting the Scripture found his initial refuge within the Manicheans which held by this time a worldview which resonated with his notion of the Scripture as corrupted and corrupting as well as its ideals about existence and the material world.

These two features cement for Augustine both a formula for friendship and a worldview in which he and his fellow luminaries could grow in agreement and cultivate each other in this newfound faith. Nevertheless, it also marks at this point an incident which would undermine his entire edifice of a carefully constructed and refined framework for friendship. At the time these features begin to coalesce, Augustine returns to Thagaste, and finds a new Manichaean friend. In many ways (which is reflected in the grammar), the unnamed friend is a reflection of Augustine's

⁹ See, n20, 17.

own life, a cradle Catholic in search of personal fulfilment in the lives of others. In the death of the unnamed friend, deploying all of the essential elements of friendship, a major issue is exposed. Augustine came to understand friendship in the classical sense, a reciprocal investment of participating *anima*. A network of mutual investiture, in which friendship becomes not only a source of inner stability and comfort but a matter of salvation. In the death of the friend, Augustine in classical terms, describes the death of his friend as a proxy death of part of himself. In other words, the nature of the friendship is exposed as temporal and predicated upon the nature of human beings. Even within the worldview of Manichaeism, this seems to fail in providing a basis for the securing of friends. The death of the friend also exposes Manichaeism as unsatisfying in providing an external narrative in which his friends along with himself fit together. Nevertheless, here we have two essential developments, Cicero's influence coupled with a search for a religious narrative in which it all may rest.

Augustine here recognises a twist of irony, in that his friend who died, chose Christ over and above himself. It becomes indicative that this story echoes a truth that he will come to share with his dead friend. In that both will become friends again in the acceptance of the baptism of the befriending God in Christ. On reflection, this would be the central nub of a fulfilment of friendship. The story of the unnamed friend exposes and illuminates for us the centrality of his entire thinking of friendship at the time of writing (c397). Here, we see it in all its classical character, which in being outside the Catholic faith is exposed to the transitory nature of things. Thus, the death of the friend resided so strongly in the memory of Augustine, because it embodies his entire theology of friendship in one event.

Following this, Augustine departs from Thagaste to go and teach in Carthage. Here his notion of friendship is consolidated amongst his colleges within the Manichean faith. Those who reside outside his faith remain acquaintances and those whom he cannot stand to be apart from, he targets for conversion. Romanianus, Alypius and Honoratus as well as others became

Manicheans with and through Augustine. Works such as *De utilitate credendi*, *De vera religione* are good examples of polemical works born out of a matrix of corrective faith in which Augustine appeals to his Manichean friends to follow him in his journey into the Catholic Church. These are prime examples of Augustine's attempt to secure past and important friends into his new religion. Without agreement of things human and divine, friendship cannot exist.

Nevertheless, at the heart of what Augustine was searching for was truth. He fell out of love with Manichaeism when it failed to satisfy sufficiently his search for a deeper and abiding truth. Truth was the key to life, and life was meaningless without love—particularly the love of his friends. Yet, they were, at this point, placed within a religious faith that was crumbling. Augustine understood that to stand aside one's worldview from one's friends was to extinguish friendship. Augustine would first seek to supplement his faith with a return to Cicero. Listening to the sermons of Ambrose, Augustine began to find in him what he did not find in Faustus, a glimpse of a greater truth. However, Augustine's first introduction to Catholic Christianity came via the Neo-Platonists. In Milan he encounters a Catholic Church at the cutting edge of Nuevo-theology. At the epicentre of his conversion *tolle lege*, Augustine discovers the truth he had yearned for. After a brief retreat at Cassiciacum, in which Augustine sought to consolidate his existing friendships within the Catholic faith, Alypius and Adeodatus were baptised by Ambrose at Easter (387). From here, everything poured forth from within the womb (*matrix*) of the Church.

Back in Africa, as a *servus Dei*, Augustine and his friends began forging their lives together with their new faith which brought together all the essential elements of friendship under one roof. With friends now being bound together within Catholic Christianity the maturation process of it becoming increasingly ecclesialised begins. Friendship before had been a mutual investment within one another based upon 'agreement' in the fundamental truths by which they shared. This of course is cemented with a reciprocal modality of love and goodwill. From within a small nexus of participating members, the broader concepts of friendship begin to spiral outwards towards all

members of Catholics belonging to Christ through his Church. By the time Augustine engages with the Donatists issue (393), he would have been fully embedded within the clerical life of the Church with a highly developed notion of the Church as the body of Christ. By the time of Augustine, the notion of the Church as the body through which God brings to birth his members into eternal life had a long and developed history of reflection.

This ecclesiology of the Church being the body of Christ, nevertheless, becomes a kernel of a flourishing trinitarian theology. This 'Pro-Nicene' agenda permeates his entire thoughts on theological issues. It underpinned his entire ecclesiology by which the Church as the body, is the exclusive entity by which human beings can become what God has called the faithful to be—servants and friends. This trinitarian ecclesiology is the basis for his polemic against those who are both heretics and schismatics. Those who belonged but did not believe correctly were internal exiles to Augustine, because they had broken the bonds of friendship with Christ through the departure of Church doctrine which flows from the Head to the Body. They appear as Catholics but are not in the *consensio* and *benevolentia et caritate*. The sacred bond of the Spirit is broken because they do not abide in him through the teachings of the Church. Schismatics on the other hand, may believe what Catholics believe, but they do not belong to his body the Church and therefore are external exiles. Either way, right belief and belonging are essential features of friendship with Christ and true Christians. Augustine, as we have seen, is highly intolerant and an imperialist in his mentality of friendship with himself and likewise with those who wish to be friends of Christ. By the time Augustine enters into the 'war of pamphlets' with Donatist leaders, he already has a clear and concrete vision of the Church and of the precepts by which it is governed and agreed upon.

At the beginning of his preaching of the *Tractatus* (406), Donatism had been dealt a decisive blow with Honorius' Edict of Unity (405). This had been the most aggressive and comprehensive legislative act by the State against the separatists since the time of Paul and Macarius. Honorius was an enthusiastic supporter of Catholic unity and vowed to complete the Christianisation of the

Empire brought about by his father's reforms (Theodosius II). As we have seen, separatism had been a feature of North African identity in relation to the Empire for many years, which often boiled over into conflict, even rebellion. This had political, financial, and cultural dynamics which became indelibly linked to North African Christianity itself. After the rupture of the Church in Africa, the two parties became ever increasingly estranged augmented by divergent political strategies and affiliations. Donatists looked for a more native and independent identity—Catholics a more universal and Imperial identity, focused upon the unity of its members. In many ways, Donatists in the age of Augustine, came to see Catholics as not only ecclesiologically redundant but agents of a foreign and non-native Imperialism. If, however, Constantine had sided with Majorinus, the history between the Donatists party and State would have looked quite different. By the issuing of the Edict, the Empire had lost patience with the *pars Donati*, which was spurred on by more pressing issues with the surrounding non-Roman tribes.

In 406 the Basilica in Hippo was now the only Church building open. Donatists had been displaced and for the first time, Donatists were entering the Catholic Basilica to hear the great Augustine preach. He understood that faith has no foundation in fear, it must become something else if it were to flourish and live. In chapter three we see how Augustine lays down the Law and roots the conversation in what it means to love. Within the matrix of the Church building, with a firm ecclesiology of the Church being a body constituted and congealed by the Trinity, that the love of God must become the bedrock of a life lived together if there was to be a future beyond the corrosive and rancorous history shared by both parties. Two things were necessary: 1). They had to come to see each other as members of Christ's body. 2). They had to belong to Christ. This was the aim of Augustine, to get them to see each other as invested in each other's lives within the life of Christ. The Church as a body of the be-friended therefore provides Augustine with a polemical structure to his hermeneutic of healing and it also exposes Augustine's own notion of friendship in relation to the *Ecclesia Catholica*.

The healing is for Augustine a matter of the heart because a city is made up of its members and a united fellowship is only possible through the Spirit which binds its members together in one holy *societatis unitate*. Rather than engage with the issue over validity directly, Augustine places the weight of his argument on being bound together. Catholics will re-learn what it means to share in the life of Christ through his grace filled love, Donatists take possession of the faith that had been denied them. In order to heal, all had to understand the demands of love and of the gravity of that offer—friendship with God himself. Only within the body of the Church bound within the life of the Holy Spirit, which connects both body and head, can love rest within the bosom of Christ and becomes friends of the Father. Because: ‘true friendship which is not possible unless you bond together those who cleave to one another by the love which ‘is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us’.¹⁰ Only within the body of Christ could friendship find its true *telos*. Within the body of the Church, the exchange of *anima* finds its perfection within the Spirit which binds all in all. The classical term, ‘*unus fiat ex pluribus*’, comes into its own, along with the rest of his thinking of friendship within the matrix of the Church. Only within the Spirit of charity could the past of both groups move forward to a shared vision of the ‘*gloriosissimam civitatem dei*’.

Within the womb of wisdom herself, Christ was able to bring to birth his friends. Friendship for Augustine provides this valuable and emotional content of the claim to not only believe but belong. Together, they could, within the bonds of love, as formative friends of Christ, become friends with each other in and through him. This project of re-orientation is part of Augustine’s project to teach his listeners what it means to love for the sake of Christ and to learn what it means to love as the Church’s members. Friendship in this context was the prize and the sacrifice of their pride, the price of a community in love with God and neighbour. It was here that the community was to commit itself to grow in agreement and to invest their spiritual care to

¹⁰ See, n1, 80.

Christ and the one who had sent the minister to them as the *vox* of the *Verbum*. Humility was a central indicator as to how one progressed in the received investment of its members into Christ through his body.

In the second part of the thesis, we see how Augustine denucleates and unlocks his vision of ecclesial friendship through his preaching on John's gospel recorded within the *Tractatus*. The method of this presentation of ecclesial friendship is displayed through his rhetorical strategy in the form of figuration, particularly in the form of tropes. These tropes are also wedded and woven into the well-established patterns of thought which have an abiding pedigree within the tradition of North African ecclesiology. Cyprian, of course forges much of the foundation upon which Augustine builds his argument for ecclesial unity. This deploying of Cyprian thrusts him into the forefront of the presentation as a witness who valued unity over and above all other concerns. Augustine, within the *Tractatus*, weaves within his preaching figurative tropes that have a long and abiding pedigree. Through the images of 'dove', 'ark', 'garment' and 'women', as his main figures,¹¹ Augustine develops his argument that the *Ecclesia Catholica* is the exclusive earthly entity which has access and enjoys the arresting love of God. Through these mental images, Augustine is able to access the minds of his listeners through simple pictures which contain complex and compelling arguments. Tropes, as a strategy, enables Augustine to convey his vision of ecclesial friendship to the masses. Augustine's main thrust is that the Church is the exclusive place where we can belong to Christ because it is his body. The Church is the place in which the members are taken across the sea of this world, the Church is the vessel of salvation which requires humility to accept. It is the place its members are made holy, 'seasoned timbers', a place where God makes 'messenger out of maggots'.

This brings us to our final chapter in which, through the figure of John the Baptist, Augustine lays out what a friend of the bridegroom looks like. John was simple, the *amicus sponsi*.

¹¹ See, 164-176.

What Augustine is doing here, is inviting the listeners to see themselves as another John, to become great amongst men, to be an agent of the Church and point others to not following their own interests but that of Christ (The Church). Augustine takes his listeners through the projection of John as one who proclaims Christ and remains an *amicus sponsi*, a friend of the bridegroom. We are reminded that ‘the one who has the bride is the bridegroom’.¹² In other words, if you want to be a friend of Christ you have to be part of the bride which is his body. There are no friends of Christ besides his bride—no befriending apart from his body.

John is also important as through him, Augustine illustrates what the features of friendship with Christ are. We have already in the previous chapter touched upon those features, but here Augustine draws out those details. The first thing Augustine tells us, is that friendship is about faithful representation, rather than self-interest. Of course, Augustine has in mind the Donatists particularly, Optatus of Thamugadi as well as Primian of Carthage and those they deployed in their service, the dreaded *circumcellion* (of whom some were standing before him). Through the figure of John, Augustine schools his listeners in the marks of authentic friendship in relation to Christ. Unlike the Donatist who only look after their own interest, Catholics are called to serve only Christ. By this Augustine is attempting to enfranchise his audience into becoming co-workers in the project of unifying the Church in Africa. True friends of the bridegroom point to Christ (the Church) and tell others to dwell there. They are to proclaim the Christ, in word and deed. Their whole lives should reflect the light of God’s love and be invested in the ministry of Christ. Augustine exhorts them to imitate the ministry of John, humbly proclaiming and serving the one who came to serve—the one who declares his true servants—friends.

Throughout our reading of friendship within the *Tractatus*, we have seen that the dominant theme of friendship is deeply rooted in Augustine’s call to be and belong. There is no true Christianity besides the Church, and in this regard, Augustine clearly has the weight of the tradition

¹² AU Jo, 13.10.

on his side. The Church had long been thought of as a place through which ‘maggots made messengers’ and more than mere messengers, members of a sacred *societatis*. Nothing in Augustine’s life was worth more to him than the *amor Dei*, and nothing more comforting than the companionship of friends. Friendship for Augustine was the greatest and most profound achievement of love, nothing more intimate and arresting than the inner embrace it achieved. Friends and friendship were the most precious and penetrating forms of love. Yet Augustine craved to hold them in his embrace forever, which he could not do within himself. For Augustine, Christ became the vessel of love’s investment, forged by the incarnation of the God who embraced his world through the Son and maintains that bond through the Spirit within the Church. The whole Christ, body and head remained the bank of souls, through which God brought to new birth his friends. Investment and intimacy are two principles Augustine required in the forging of true friendship. Within the Church, he would invest himself and his friends within the Church’s embrace. Through the Church he would, along with himself, preserve them forever. Within the context of the Donatist schism, Augustine like his close group of friends, calls all to join him in the vessel of friendship. That the Church is a place of sacred belonging and place of sacred binding. Belong to the bride—be a friend of the bridegroom:

But Christ unhesitatingly died for his bride, because he was to marry her when he rose from the dead. All the same, Brothers and Sisters, we must conduct ourselves in the meantime like servants or like a maid. It is true that the Lord said, *I call you servants no longer; I call you friends* (Jn 15:15), but perhaps he meant this only for the disciples. No; listen to Paul, who says, *You are a servants no longer, but a son; and if a son, an heir too, through God’s act* (Gal 4:7); and Paul was speaking to the whole people, to all the faithful. Already we have been redeemed and claimed as the Lord’s possession by his blood, we have been washed in the laver of his baptism, we are sons and daughters—or rather we are the one single son, because though many we are one in him.¹³

¹³ AU Ps, 122.5 (WSA, III: 20), 27-8; ‘securus autem ille pro sponsa mortuus est: quam resurgens erat ducturus. uerumtamen, fratres, interim simus quomodo serui et ancilla. dictum est quidem: non uos dicam seruos, sed amicos [Io 15,15]; sed forte solis discipulis dixit dominus? audite apostolum Paulum dicentem: itaque iam, inquit, non est seruus, sed filius; si autem filius, et heres per deum [Gal 4,7]. populo dicebat, fidelibus dicebat. iam ergo in nomine domini redempti sanguine ipsius, loti lauacro ipsius, filii sumus, filius sumus; quia sic multi sumus, ut in illo unus simus.’ (CCSL, 40: 1818). Also see, AU Jo 8.4.

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