<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name</strong></th>
<th>Colleen Shelley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Title</strong></td>
<td>The Innate Unity and Sociality of Humanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Sub-Title</strong></td>
<td>Its Call to Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Director</strong></td>
<td>Rodney Howsare, Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Theology)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

In the course of history, man has always searched for a deeper meaning to his life and a greater understanding into what it means to be human. While humans have a biological connection to the animal kingdom, it is apparent that there are essential qualities which separate humans from the rest of creation. One of the qualities that set humans apart is the way in which humans have the ability to love one another. In this expression of love, human sociality becomes apparent as innate to the existence of humanity. The reality of human sociality is second nature to all humans. It seems obvious that the world necessitates the existence of other people. However, the impact of the presence of other people is often overlooked. Man comes to recognize his individuality only after recognizing the uniqueness of other people. In this unique expression of sociality, humans are called to love and care for one another as members of a community.

Through other people, we are able to more fully understand ourselves. Every human encounter changes us in some way. In the words of John Donne, “No Man is an island, entire of itself. Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.” It is only after recognizing the existence of “another” that we come to acknowledge our individual existence. Through the understanding of human limitations visible in other people, we are able to recognize our own limitations. In addition, the way we are perceived by other people can help us to understand ourselves. Often we are too blinded by the idea of the person that we wish we were that we fail to recognize the person we truly are. We recognize talents and achievements in
others but fail to see our own until others recognize them in us. Only through recognizing our own limitations and sinfulness can we come to recognize the need for forgiveness and a Savior. Thomas Merton once wrote, “I cannot discover God in myself, and myself in Him unless I have the courage to face myself exactly as I am, with all my limitations, and to accept others as they are, with all their limitations.”ii Through Jesus, we are able to be restored to our true selves. We can only truly learn to love ourselves when we recognize that we are loved by another.iii Inspired by that love, we show it to other people. Every expression of love between humans prepares them to love God more fully.iv By loving His creation, man can love God more fully. In addition, by understanding ourselves and other people better we come to understand God more fully than we ever could through studying about Him.

Man is essentially a created being. Man exists solely because his existence was willed by God. When God created Adam, He created him in His image and likeness. “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female created them”.v Creation in God’s image and likeness means that man is similar in nature to God and is able to carry out His mission to some extent.vi This gives rise to the dignity of personhood. No other aspect of creation can boast being created in God’s own image. God created man last, because man was the high point of his creation.vii Genesis is not just about the creation of one man. Rather, it is about the creation of humanity as a whole. Humanity participates in God’s mission and is given dominion over the rest of the earth. The common origin and dignity of all men establishes the foundation for the unity of humanity.viii

God gives Adam the task of naming all of the animals. However, Adam is unable to find
a suitable partner among the animals and feels lonely in the Garden of Eden. “The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him.” While Adam is asleep, God takes a rib from Adam and creates Eve to be a suitable partner for him. “So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.” Thus the Adam-Eve relationship becomes the first example of an equal partnership within humanity. Despite the sexual differentiation between the two, they are equal because they are both human. Adam and Eve are able to recognize that God has given them each other. Adam is no longer alone in the world because he has someone like him.

As the story of the first couple continues, God tells them that they must not eat the apple from the Tree of Knowledge. However, Adam and Eve are tempted by the serpent who tells them that they will be able to be like God if they eat from the tree. This temptation causes them to disobey God by eating the apple. This lends itself to the existence of Original Sin. From this point onward, humans are born marked by Original Sin. St. Paul affirms this in his letter to the Romans, “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned.” Sin, then, is a communal experience, not an individualistic experience. The presence of sin permeates humanity. The pain and suffering of man and the inclination toward sin are explained through the Fall. While at first this seems unfair to attribute sin to all of humanity from the fault of one person, the unity of humanity explains how this is shared. Creation is expressed as the original community. Since sin opposes God’s plan for the intended state of the world, sin is the disruption of the original
community.

**God’s Saving Love**

After the fall of Adam and Eve, humanity was damaged. God sent Jesus to restore and repair humanity to its intended state. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

God, in the person of Jesus Christ, took on an earthly form as man. Jesus, as the perfect human, can then be used to describe what it truly means to be part of humanity. Jesus gave His life out of love for the world and obedience to the Father. By His death on the cross, Jesus was able to save each individual person. Jesus is the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”

He did not die for a select group of people; His death was universal to all people of all times. St. Paul writes, “Therefore just as one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.”

Through His life and death, Jesus fulfilled the covenant that God made to His people. God’s fulfillment of the covenant was out of love for His people.

Love can only be expressed in terms of others. Jesus is the one person who lived totally for others. Throughout His life on earth, Jesus performed many miracles and preached to people of all ages and states in life. He did not single out a select group of people. This serves to demonstrate the innate equality of all people regardless of differences. Jesus' ministry involved personal connections with people instead of an abstract involvement in the world. He “came down from heaven” for direct involvement in the world rather than directing from heaven.
talked to people, healed people, shared meals and met people on a personal level. In addition, He called upon His disciples to follow Him to carry out His mission. This personal involvement that Jesus took with the world shows the necessity of personal connection and relationships to salvation. Through Jesus, the community of humanity is connected to God, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; No one comes to the Father except through me.” Our relationship of love through Jesus is the only way we can obtain salvation.

Our understanding of God’s relationship of love cannot be fully explained without discussing the nature of God as a triune God. The being of God is made up of three persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The three persons are consubstantial. The Father sent the Son to restore humanity to its intended state. He willfully gave His Son in sacrificial love for His people. The Son willfully accepted His death out of love for all of humanity. The Spirit is sent as a gift to all people for the grace to love and live as Christ commands us to live. By nature, God is a relational being. God’s very being exists in the relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The three persons cannot be separate because neither exists without the others. Community is not only exhibited among God and His people, but within the nature of God. As beings created in the image and likeness of God, humans too are relational in nature.

The Communion of Saints

United by the love of the Trinity, we are called to be participants in the community of saints. The community of saints is the spiritual union which connects all people of all times. As members of the community of saints, humans “form a single body in Christ, to enter into
relationship with all who derive their life from the grace bestowed life, to unite ourselves to the Trinity, the beginning and end of all communion. The Church is made up of many individuals that comprise one body, the Body of Christ. First Corinthians explains the unity of the members of the church through the analogy of the body:

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

In this passage, St Paul explains that the Church is comprised of many members. Its membership is not exclusive based on state in life. There is an open invitation to all people based solely on their existence as humans. St. Paul continues:

Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

Paul further explains that the Church is made up of individuals. Each person brings a set of gifts to the Body of Christ. In addition, God has a unique plan for each person, and each person has a specific role within the body. The individuality of the members of the Church is necessary for the collective good of the Church. St Paul also states:

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.
This calls special attention to the equality of the members within the body. God has called each person to fulfill a specific task within the community of faith. However, each role demands an equal level of respect. In addition, because the members of the community are all part of one body, the community as a whole and each individual member must have a specific concern for each person within the community. As a result of the unity of the Church’s members, the intrinsic and extrinsic possessions are held common. This explanation of the Church as one body provides insight into the sociality of the Church. In order to enter into communion with Jesus, it is necessary to enter into relationship with all the members of the body. Just as the brain controls the body, the Body of Christ depends on the head, Jesus Christ in order to function properly.

Unity within the community can also be seen in the Church itself. The Church is called to be “a sign and sacrament of man’s unity with God and the unity of the whole human race.” Participation in the Church is not limited to a particular set of people. The Church has a presence in all countries and all languages. The Church is also not limited to the “spiritually superior.” The Church is not meant to be a museum of saints, but rather a hospital for sinners. We are all sinners; therefore we are all given the participation in the Church. In the Nicene Creed, the people of the Church profess faith in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. These are the four marks of the Church. The Church is one, because it is unified as the Body of Christ. Members of the Church profess one faith, one baptism. The oneness of the Church was directly given by Jesus. Jesus said, “That they may all be one. As you Father are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us... so that the world may know that you have sent me.” The unity of the church is derived from the source of the Trinity. In addition, the Church is holy, which
means that it is set apart for the mission of God. The Church’s mission is directly tied to the mission of Christ for all people to be united to Him. The Church is catholic, meaning it is universal, open to all regardless of time or place. The Church is sent on a mission to the entirety of humanity. "And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” The Church’s mission does not end until all are brought into union with Christ. Apostolic refers to its origins in the apostles, the first followers of Christ. Apostolic also calls attention to the apostolic succession through the pope. The pope is given the teaching authority over the church. The four marks of the church show the connection of people through the Church regardless of place or time. The faith professed today is the same as the faith professed 2000 years ago.

The sacraments of the Church are comprised of social elements which verify the need for community. As defined by the Catechism, “A sacramental celebration is a meeting of God’s children with their Father, in Christ and the Holy Spirit.” In Baptism, new members are welcomed into the community of faith. Man enters into the divine community, the life of the Trinity, through Baptism. “Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission.” We become members of the Body of Christ through Baptism. “For by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body.” In Baptism, we are brought into communion with Christ’s death. “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were
baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”xxxvii Through Baptism, the person is called to commit to love and serve the entire communion of the Church. Baptism is not an individualistic experience. It demands the faith of the believer which he is only able to develop within the Church.xxxviii The parents and godparents are called upon to help the newly baptized develop their faith. Baptism fulfills the mission Jesus gave to his disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”xxxix Each Easter, the faithful renew their baptismal promises. Baptism is the foundation of communion for all Christians, including those that are not in full communion with the Catholic Church. For this reason, once a person has been baptized into the Christian faith, he does not need to be re-baptized in order to become Catholic.xl Baptism leaves an indelible mark on the believer.

Confirmation constitutes the completion of the baptismal grace. Through Confirmation, the believer is bound more perfectly to the Church.xli The effect of Confirmation is the full gift of the Holy Spirit, given to the apostles at Pentecost.xlii It enables the person to bear witness to the Christian faith. xliii Confirmation, like Baptism leaves an indelible mark on the person receiving the sacrament. Confirmation further develops the notion of dependence on other people. In Confirmation, a sponsor agrees to help the candidate to strengthen their faith and maturity in the Church. The sponsor guides them through the preparation before Confirmation to help them fully understand the responsibility that comes with being confirmed. The celebration of Confirmation
is performed during the Eucharist. This further expresses the unity of the Sacraments of Initiation.

The Sacrament of the Eucharist is the third of the Sacraments of Initiation. It is the Source and Summit of the Christian life. Through the celebration of the Eucharist, we are joined with Christ and His apostles at the Last Supper. At the Last Supper, Christ instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. By receiving communion, we receive Jesus’ very Body and Blood. We offer Jesus bread and wine and it is transubstantiated into His very Body and Blood. This reception of the Eucharist deepens the relationship of Jesus to His people. Jesus does not simply watch over us and offer guidance. He makes himself truly present within us. As Jesus said, “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.” Through the Eucharist we are united more closely to Christ, and we further unite ourselves with all others in communion with the Catholic Church. The Eucharist nourishes and conserves the union of the Church. The Eucharistic sacrifice is celebrated at every mass. The community gathers to celebrate the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. When Catholics receive communion, we call attention to the unity of the Church. For this reason, the invitation to receive communion is not extended to non-Catholics. To do so would be to recognize a unity of beliefs that is not existent with non-Catholic denominations. Other Christian denominations view the Eucharist as merely a sign of Christ’s sacrifice instead of Christ’s Body and Blood.

The Eucharist is not the only aspect of the mass that calls our attention to the unity of humanity and the unity of God to His people. When the Mass is celebrated, people across the world are united in one celebration. Although the Mass is said in every language, the celebration is essentially the same. The text of the mass calls our attention to unity of the whole mystical
Body of Christ. At the beginning of mass, during the Penitential Act, we confess our sins to our brothers and sisters in Christ. We then ask Mary, the angels, saints, and all our brothers and sisters for their prayer. During the Liturgy of the Word, we hear the words of God. God is truly present to us in His words. The priest gives a homily to help us to better understand the readings, and their application to our life. This enables us to make a better connection to the Word. During the Profession of Faith, we recite the Nicene Creed, mentioned earlier. The Church comes together to profess one common faith. Following the Profession of Faith is the General Intercessions. During this time, we offer prayers for the world. Our participation at mass is not just for our own sake, but for the sake of the entire Body of Christ. During the Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts, the priest offers the bread and wine to Christ on behalf of the entire community. During the Eucharistic Prayer, we recall the words Christ said to His disciples at the Last Supper, “Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’” The Our Father is recited after the Eucharistic Prayer. The Our Father is essentially a communal prayer. It makes use of phrases like “our father”, and “give us this day our daily bread.” When we receive Communion, we truly receive Jesus. He is present to us in the form of bread and wine. After communion, we are sent forth to love and serve the Lord. By virtue of serving the Lord, we must serve His people.

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the penitent recognizes that he has sinned against God, asks for forgiveness, and strives to do better. Baptism washes away the stain of original sin, but Reconciliation cleanses the person of personal sin. Penance restores us to the good graces of
God. Reconciliation not only puts people right with God, but also with the whole community of believers. Since sin is not just an offense against God, but also an offense against humanity, restoration must occur. Jesus granted his apostles the right to reconcile sinners to the Church. Jesus said to Simon Peter: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” For this reason, communion with the Church cannot be separated from communion with heaven. For this reason, communion with the Church cannot be separated from communion with heaven.

Reconciliation in the presence of mortal sin is necessary in order to receive communion. Since communion serves as a symbol of the unity of the Church, it would be contradictory to receive communion when one is not reconciled with the Church. Any venial sins are forgiven at the start of every mass. When the priest celebrates Reconciliation, he is acting in Persona Christi, the Person of Christ. It is the intention of Christ that all be restored to his community. Christ is the Good Shepherd that goes in search of the lost sheep. God does not abandon us even when we sin. He forgives us and pursues us. Just as the father rejoices over the return of his son in the parable of the Prodigal Son, God rejoices over our return to Him.

In the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, the Church asks the ill to unite their sufferings with the Passion of Christ. Anointing of the Sick gives people the grace of the Holy Spirit to help them through their illness. It provides the ill person with strength and courage. It does not necessarily mean that they will be cured of their ailment. During human illness, Jesus makes the illnesses his own. “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.” Humans are asked to take up the crosses of their lives, which include illnesses. Jesus gives the Church the specific task of healing the Sick. The Sacrament of Healing of the Sick relates to the bible passage, “In my name ... they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.” Like the Sacrament of
Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick can be received more than once. It is reserved for those who are ill, about to undergo a serious operation, or those who are close to death. This sacrament is a communal celebration. It is typically celebrated within the Eucharist. Through the celebration of the sacrament, the communion of saints intercedes on behalf of the person.

**Learning to Live as Social Creatures**

Sociality is the tool used by humans to attain goals by relating to one another. Like other aspects of life, sociality is experienced differently throughout the stages of life. As a person ages, he is constantly striving to be holier and more united to Christ. In doing so, he strives to improve himself as created in the image and likeness of God. This requires a constant striving to strengthen relations with the Body of Christ. The human person is constantly seeking a better understanding of the world and his existence. By growing in understanding of himself as a human, he understands more about his existence as a social being. Through this, a person learns how to use sociality and relationality towards achieving unity.

Birth by its very nature is relational. Before birth, a child’s personality and genes are a result of relationships between the parents and ancestors that came before them. When a child is born, the child is born from the mother. In the child’s earliest stages of development, while still in the womb of the mother, he experiences life as totally dependent on the mother. Every experience is that of the mother he is within. During childbirth, oxytocin, a hormone, is released which bonds child to mother. When the child is born, he begins to experience life without the confines of the womb. Still, he is completely dependent on others to take care of him. He realizes
that through crying he can command the attention of other people. However, others are seen as means of satisfying a particular need. He is not yet able to comprehend the idea of codependence.

Throughout the child’s infancy, affection is extremely essential to the development of the child. In a study conducted by researchers including Charles Nelson of Harvard Medical School, affection during infancy was shown to be essential to the development of the person. Orphans in some Romanian orphanages were given very little affection. As they got older, they exhibited severe attachment disorders. In addition, they exhibited cognitive and physical attributes of six year olds when they were fifteen years old. Interaction with others is essential to both brain development and mental health. Brain development is related to an interaction of genes and environment. Linguistic input and stimulation is essential to developing the brain. Social environment affects neural and hormonal signals that govern behavior. Infancy is when the brain develops most rapidly. Therefore, it is essential to provide the right environment during this time for the best outcome. During infancy, the child also learns about relationships with others. If the child is denied secure attachment at a young age, he will have a much more difficult time establishing healthy relationships in the future. Children that lack affection will have difficulty establishing connections, trusting others and developing self-worth.

Throughout early childhood, the child begins to learn more about what it means to live in relation to other people. The family serves as socialization for the child and helps him to learn how to communicate with other people. For most children, the family enables the child to learn about building relationships with other people in a safe environment. The child also learns how to share with other people and begins to realize that other people do not exist solely for his
needs. He begins to understand the autonomy of other people by realizing that members of his family participate in activities that do not directly relate to him. In addition, he starts to learn to do things for himself. His ties with his family are still strong, but he recognizes the autonomy of himself.

During childhood and adolescence, school serves as a socialization tool which fills any gaps left by the family. The child begins to form friendships that are of his choosing. The attention of others is no longer automatic, but must be earned. There becomes a shift away from the family as the primary socialization group to people that the child encounters during school and other social situations. For most, school is the first experience of rejection by other people. The new goal of the child is winning the affection of the other people that he encounters. In the pursuit of this goal, he is faced with peer pressure. He is forced to choose between the acceptance of others and making decisions that he thinks are the most moral decisions. Attention by other people becomes a competition among peers. For the most part, his relationships with us are still centered on the benefits he attains from them.

**Our Vocation to Love**

Adulthood brings a new experience of sociality to the human person. It is during adulthood that people fulfill their vocations. Whether the person is called to the single life, married life or religious life, each vocation brings about some unique sense of sociality. When a person is called to the single life, it does not sanction isolation from the world. Rather, it provides an opportunity for the person to live in relation to other people in a distinct way. Single
people are able to dedicate their time to the world to do service without restrictions of a religious order or the demands of a family. They are also called to maintain friendships with other people and to have a general concern for the world. They are called to show the same love for the world that people of other vocations show. Singlehood is a vocation that all are called to live at some point in life. People who get married or join a religious order still experience time as independent single people.

In marriage, two people are joined together in a uniquely special union. They are called to love each other unconditionally, to love one another as Christ loves His Church, and to become a living sign of that love. As expressed in the creation story, God wills man and woman to be for each other. “It is not good for man to be alone.” God creates woman out of man. Adam recognizes Eve as part of him, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.” Adam and Eve recognize that they have been given to each other even before they chose each other. In marriage, two people are joined as one, “a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.” Spouses are called to love each other more than they love themselves. Ephesians illustrates the responsibilities of love in a marriage:

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.
Spouses are called to be mutually submissive to each other. Marriage is an equal partnership in which each is responsible for helping the other to grow in holiness. While Paul states that the man is the head of the family, he also states that he must love his wife as himself. Since the two have now become one, man cannot love himself without loving his wife as well.

God’s love is made visible in the marital relationship and gives them the strength to overcome hardships. Marriage thrives in an environment of mutual trust, submission and forgiveness. It combines romantic love and friendship. Christian marriage is permanent. God never abandons us; likewise we must not abandon our spouses. Marriage is not based on feelings, but rather, fidelity. It stems from the recognition of the dignity and value of the other person. Jesus warns against divorce in Matthew’s gospel, “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” The Sacrament of Matrimony, like other sacraments leaves a permanent mark on the person. For this reason, the Church does not recognize divorce, which the secular world recognizes as the dissolution of marriage. Annulments recognize that there were essential elements missing from the beginning, and therefore there was never a sacramental marriage.

During Matrimony, the couple promises to have openness towards children. They agree to not limit their love to just themselves, but to be open to the gift of children if that is part of God’s plan for their life together. The sexual act between spouses is not merely meant for the sole purpose of being unitive, but also procreative. In Genesis, God says “Be fruitful and multiply.” Through the bearing of children, spouses become co-creators. Families are essential to the Church. They are called to be domestic churches.
communities of faith, hope and love. The Christian family is a communion of persons which serves as a sign of the communion that exists between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through families, children are educated and brought up in the faith. It is in the family that children first come to know love in order to have some capacity to understand the love of God. Parents are called to love their children unconditionally, as our heavenly Father loves His children unconditionally. Children are called to show respect for their parents, which is expressed in the Fourth Commandment. Apart from having children, married couples are called to show love towards other people. However, the specific expression of love between the two spouses is to be kept within the marriage. The love of the married couple is called to be an example of Christ’s love for the Church to all people.

People called to religious life are called to sociality in a different way than married people. The religious have a special mission within the Church. Priests are called to be teachers and counselors to the wider community of faith. Religious brothers and sisters also perform many ministries within the church. Many are teachers, youth workers, and health care providers. Even cloistered nuns are called to a type of sociality. Cloistered nuns bring the needs of the world into their prayer time. They do not remove themselves entirely from the rest of the world. They are connected to other people in the world through Jesus, in prayer. Religious life involves living in community with each other. Their religious community becomes a family to them. Although people who are called to the religious life do not experience the union with another person in the same sense that married people do, their life is immersed in social interactions with other people. The religious congregation is called to express the love for fellow man that
transcends the natural world into the divine. By nature, God is community. The more fully man lives in community with others, the more fully man lives as God lives.\textsuperscript{lxix}

The Sacrament of Holy Orders is celebrated in order for a man to be a priest or deacon. It is the sacrament in which the apostolic succession is carried out. In the Old Testament, the Levi tribe was “appointed to act on behalf of man in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.”\textsuperscript{lxxii} The priesthood of the Old Covenant was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He truly offered a sacrifice, his life, for our sins. This sacrifice is made present in the Eucharist, celebrated at mass. The priest acts in \textit{persona Christi}, the person of Christ, at mass during the Eucharist. It is Jesus who is truly present to us. Therefore, the sin of the minister does not affect the graces of the sacrament. This sacrament is one of the two sacraments at the service of communion. It was instituted for the purpose of the communion of the Church. The priest represents Christ before the Church and also represents the whole Church when he presents the prayer to God.\textsuperscript{lxxiii} The Sacrament has three degrees: the episcopacy, presbyterate, and deaconate. The first two are ministerial and third degree is to help and serve the first two. The deaconate can be conferred to married men. The Sacrament gives the recipient grace of the Holy Spirit to serve as a representative of Christ, in the role of priest, teacher and pastor. Deacons are strengthened to dedicate themselves more fully to the needs of the Church.

In order to share in mutual love with another person, it requires a degree of reciprocity on the part of the other person. The other person must open himself to the love of another. Every relationship involves a degree of risk. There is always the chance that the person will not reciprocate love and concern. In addition, circumstances beyond our control can disrupt the relationship. One way to illustrate the fundamental nature of sociality is to examine the effect of
its absence. Countless numbers of plays, movies and songs illustrate the idea of lost love in some form. The death of a loved one, unrequited love and separation all conjure up feelings of loneliness. At some point in life, everyone experiences the misery that comes with lost love. Sadness comes from knowing that the joy once experienced by the presence of the person is no longer there. The love for the person is still there, but the presence of sociality is no longer felt.

Sociality in Psychology

In Psychology, depression, social anxiety and other manifestations of mood and personality disorders are linked to a traumatic experience. Often this traumatic experience is related to the relationship of another person. Whether it was abuse, a death or divorce, all of these traumatic experiences are linked to a breaking of a union with another person. According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, love/belonging is the third of the five needs. In order for a person to obtain esteem and ultimately, self-actualization, the person must have a sense of love or belonging. This sense of belonging can stem from family, friendship and intimacy. As demonstrated earlier, the orphans in the Romanian orphanages that were denied affection grew up to have developmental and social problems.

Connections with friends and family have been consistently shown in surveys to be valued over wealth and fortune by most people. However, many people have a difficult time forming connections. Some of the reasons for this struggle deal with social disorders. Many people suffer from social anxiety or other disorders that make forming relationships difficult. For other people, failed relationships in the past make trusting new people difficult. People worry
that others will not accept them for who they are or they worry that others will hurt them the way others have in the past. However, avoidance of other people only leads to more loneliness. Isolation and loneliness are contributing factors to depression. In their attempt to avoid pain and suffering, they cause more pain and suffering for themselves. It is important not to shy away from people out of fear of suffering. People who cause us suffering can still teach us about ourselves.\textsuperscript{1xxv} They can teach about the resiliency of humans after broken relationships and the impact of forgiveness after someone has hurt us.

In the criminal justice system, solitary confinement is used as a form of punishment. In solitary confinement, prisoners are prevented from human contact with the exception of corrections staff for necessary interactions. Punishment is an action that suppresses the freedom of the individual in order to establish some degree of retribution, rehabilitation, deterrence and incapacitation. Punishment is not meant to be something that is pleasant Therefore, it can be concluded that limited human contact is undesirable. The prisoner is still capable of love and unity with others. However, his punishment prevents him from fulfilling this capability.\textsuperscript{1xxvi} This illustrates how the interaction with and presence of other people contributes to the happiness of people.

This need for social connection is also exhibited in the rise of technology. In the last decade, there has been an increased obsession with technology and social networking. As the internet and technology have evolved, so has the ability to communicate with other people. In recent years, cell phones and social networking sites have made it increasingly easy to stay connected to other people. People are no longer limited by geographical location. In addition, online dating sites have also become an increasingly popular way to meet people. The internet
gives us access to information about other people that was formerly limited. However, this can give people a false sense of connectedness to other people. Although the amount of information and convenience increase, the interpersonal connection that comes with direct communication can get lost. People can pretend to be whoever they want to online. It is difficult to truly get to know someone this way. Nevertheless, this obsession gives evidence to the desire of every human person to feel connected to other people.

Working Towards Community

Community should be the main goal of human existence since community leads to the fulfillment of what it means to be human. The Bible makes several references to the need for community. In Ephesians 4, Paul discusses the importance of building up community:

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it is said, ‘When he ascended on high and made captivity itself a captivity; he gave gifts to his people.’ (When it says he ascended what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostle, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up of the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming but speaking the truth in love. We must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.

This passage further discusses the notion of the Church as the Body of Christ. God created people with various gifts and talents. Although every person is called to serve a different
function within the body, all are necessary for the body to flourish. Psalm 133 also expresses the blessedness of unity:

How good and pleasant it is
when God’s people live together in unity!
It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron’s beard,
down on the collar of his robe.
It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the LORD bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.

This Psalm states that God blessings are bestowed when His people are unified. In Matthew, Jesus affirms his presence in community, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” Each individual should enter into relationships with others in order to collaborate in the task demanded by the unity of humanity. Our mission is to build up the Body of Christ and we must not relent until this is achieved.

Building up the Body of Christ can only be achieved through love. However, like other commands of God, He gives us everything we need in order to love others. As humans, we were created in the image and likeness of God. God is love and God creates love. “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” Therefore, we are created out of love with the capacity to love. In addition we have the ability to love because we have Christ within us. “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Love can only be expressed in terms of others. We must love others. The image of God is not just a gift; it is a task. We have been created in the image of God;
however, we must complete the image by our yes to God’s will. Our task is to show God’s love to all people. However, because we have been given free will, we have been given the opportunity to choose our participation in love. Love cannot be forced upon someone, or else it is not truly love. This is the basis of free will. God willed our existence out of love. He asks us to love Him back. However, true love can only exist in terms of freedom. The person must be free to choose to love in return. Our decision to love God is expressed in our actions. Likewise, we must decide to love other people. Loving someone is the choice to recognize the value of another person and to treat them in accordance with that dignity. Love means to will the good of the other.

Every missed opportunity to love is a missed opportunity for community. Community becomes a moral matter in which decisions are based on the “common good.” The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines the common good as, “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.” Moral acts are ones that benefit, or at the very least do not serve to harm the good of the community. It follows that evil is individualistic in nature. Sin is a distortion of the good. Therefore, sin stems from putting oneself before others. Sin occurs from the failure to fully comprehend the connection of every human being, and how the action on the part of the individual affects the whole. We must always seek to avoid anything that could disrupt the community. Intentions have a tremendous impact on the nature of an action. The intention to do good deeds, even if the result is not as we expected, is still moral. Sincere altruistic actions are successful even if they are not received well by the other person.
Morality seeks to do what is right. It seeks to return the state of the world according to how God intend the world to be. God created human beings to live in relation with other people. Humanity was created out of love, to love and be loved, and to share this love with each other. The moral person seeks to be as God intended them to be. Authentic happiness is found in the fulfillment of the human person. Because a person is free to act according to his own conscience, actions of the human person are susceptible to moral evaluation. The object, intention and circumstances influence the moral character of an action. If fulfillment of the human person is achieved only through understanding oneself as a person related to others, it would fit that a person must necessarily build the community of humanity in order to be moral. This is seen in the notion of the “common good.” Even institutions that claim no affiliation to religious principles, such as governments, claim the “common good” as part of their goals. This is because at the heart of every human person is the notion that the moral action consists in the welfare of other people. We cannot live for ourselves; we must live for other people in order to be happy. In turn, by living a moral life, the person bears witness to his own dignity as a child of God.

As a child of God and part of the Body of Christ, we are responsible for all other members of the Body. True satisfaction is dependent on the happiness of other people. Participation in the Body of Christ necessitates service and charity to other people. Our responsibility is not limited to the people with whom we have direct contact. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus explains to the apostles who are their neighbors:

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied, “How do you read it?” He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to
Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

This gospel story expresses how we are called to be charitable to all people, regardless of our relationship with them. The Samaritan did not know the man lying in the road. However, he chose to care for him simply because he was another person. St. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians further explains our call to all people, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

Our response to all people cannot be based on divisions of gender, race or nationality. This responsibility for other people extends beyond our immediate family, our town, and our country to include the entire world. We should be concerned about injustice and suffering in other parts of the world because their suffering is our suffering. Ultimately, we all belong to the Body of Christ. In order to love Christ, we must love His Body. Jesus explains to His apostles in Matthew’s gospel how by loving others we come to love Him:

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you
gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not
welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’
Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or
naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell
you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will
go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

It is important then that we always recognize that Jesus lives within each person. By
acknowledging the presence of God in every person, we recognize the dignity of every
human person. We also come to realize that we are not just serving others, but also
Christ.

Our service to others is directly derived from the gifts that God gave to us. We are called
to love the world and be charitable based on our ability to do so. On judgment day, we will be
judged based on how we used the talents and gifts that we have been given. The parable of the
Widow’s Offering expresses this notion:

He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the
treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper
coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, ‘Truly I tell you,
this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them
have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had,
all she had to live on.’

God wants us to give entirely of ourselves. He wants us to truly make a sacrifice. However, he
does not ask of us that which he has not already given us the grace to do. If we have the ability to
contribute financially to charities, then we are called to do so. However, apart from financial
support there is much that we can do to build the community of God. First, we must ensure that
our words to others are beneficial towards building up the other person. Insults and slanders are
not conducive to building up of God’s community. Second, we must ensure our actions are also
conducive to community. This goes back to the notion that sin is a disruption of the community of humanity. Any sin against one person is a sin against the whole community.

However, it is not enough to simply avoid evil. We must also actively pursue the good. This means going out of our way to do something nice for other people. The Church highlights some of these actions in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The spiritual works of mercy include instructing the ignorant, counseling the doubtful, admonishing sinners, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving willfully, comforting the afflicted, and praying for the living and the dead. The corporal works of mercy include feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, housing the homeless, visiting the sick, ransoming the captive, and burying the dead. The corporal works of mercy refer back to Matthew 25:31-46, the Judgment of the Nations. All of these works of mercy transcend time. There is always a time in which there is a great need for these works.

Our actions do not have to be grandiose. Rather, they can be seemingly simple things. As Mother Teresa once said, “God does not ask great things of us, just small things with great love.” Mother Teresa made serving other people the mission of her life. She cared for the sick and dying, even if that only meant comforting them in their last minutes on earth. Jesus also exemplified this in his lifetime. While he performed grand miracles, he also took the time to do small things as well. In our everyday lives, there are plenty of opportunities to do simple things, from holding a door open for someone to saying hello to a stranger. Often these are referred to as “random acts of kindness.” In a way, these cannot be called random since every act of love is a deliberate decision to treat the person with dignity. Regardless, it is good to get into the habit of
doing simple nice things for other people, especially those whom you do not know. We do not know what challenges the other person is facing and how much a little encouragement can impact their lives. In turn, kindness could influence the person to do something nice for someone else which could start a chain reaction. This idea of a chain reaction became popularized in the movie **Pay It Forward**, in which a boy tries to impact the world by doing something nice for three people then having them each do something nice for three people. At the end of the movie, the viewer is able to see how this idea reached various parts of the country and how his decision really did start a chain reaction. It is important to note, however, that doing good does not mean giving alms or doing acts of kindness in a passive occasional way. We must be striving to create a constant atmosphere of kindness and solidarity.

As members of the Body of Christ we are called to be committed to the welfare of the entire community of the Body. A famous analogy compares the contribution of the chicken and the pig to a breakfast meal. The chicken participates in the making of the meal, but the pig is invested. After all, the chicken just lays an egg whereas the pig must die in order to provide bacon. As Christians, we are called to be like the pig in the analogy. While it is not necessary to physically die in order to bring about the communion of the Body of Christ, we must die to ourselves. Jesus said, “For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” Our concern must be for other people above our own desires. By making the investment of our lives to the goodness of the Body of Christ, we become “bread” for others to help them in their journey as well. The world gives value to those in power. However, Jesus calls us to be servants for other people, “he sat down, called the twelve, and said to them,
‘whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all’. Jesus exhibited this servant attitude at the Last Supper when he washed the feet of his apostles. During the time when Jesus lived, washing the feet of another person was only done by a servant. It was considered to be a menial task that was beneath the dignity of the common man. However, Jesus was showing us that we must live with a servant heart. The goal of a Christian life should not be to obtain as much power and prestige as possible. It should be to spread the love of Christ to all that we encounter. Our commitment to others shows our commitment to Christ. As St. Francis of Assisi once said, “Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words.” Our actions towards other people and the love that we show should bring others to know God’s love more fully. They should be able to get a glimpse of Christ when they encounter us.

Despite the fact that we have been given the grace of God to love others, we are also limited by our human existence. Within us, there is a struggle between our own autonomy and pride and the desire to do what is right. Sometimes, loving another person is difficult. Love involves forgiving other people who have hurt us. However, we must forgive others in order to repair damages that are caused by human sinfulness. Often we are confronted by the struggle to love those who do not show love towards us. However, Jesus tells us in Luke’s gospel that we must love our enemies:

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you. ‘If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. ‘Your reward will be great, and you will”
be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. xcvi

It is easy to sit and listen to a friend who has always been there. However, God calls us to go beyond ourselves and to do what is difficult. Only when we truly recognize God within them can we learn to love our enemies, and to treat them according to their dignity as fellow human beings. It is important that we remember that the other person is human and is therefore susceptible to the same temptations that we are. In doing so we accept the person as they are and where they are in their journey of faith. When we deny love to any one person, we ultimately deny love to the whole community. xcvii Using the analogy of the Body, we cannot say we love our body if we hate our arm. Likewise, if we hate a member of the community we cannot fully love the community.

Loving another and forgiveness does not mean that we that we condone the sin of the other person. True love rests in wanting what is best for the other person. Therefore, true love cannot condone any sin because it cuts the person off from the community of God. xciii Separation from the rest of the Body of Christ is not in the best interest of the individual. While we are called to love others, and not to judge others, we must also help others to grow in holiness.

In today’s society there are many misconceptions as to the nature of love. Love is viewed as an emotion of attraction and affection. When the feelings of happiness go away, so does the love. However, St. Paul explains the true nature of love in his first letter to the Corinthians:

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.²
This scripture verse is commonly read during the Sacrament of Matrimony. However, this description of love is not meant to be limited to the love between spouses. Our relationships with other people are meant to be self-sacrificing. We must ensure that our deeds are solely for the good of the other person and not a means of seeking some reward. When we approach our relationships with others as a means of gaining for ourselves, we fail to recognize the dignity of the other person. We see them as means to an end. We rob the other person of their personhood. Self-transcendence in altruistic love is the human way to ontological fulfillment.

The goal of every Christian life is to be joined with God in heaven. At the end of the world, the Body of Christ will be united in heaven. During our time on earth, we are called to carry out God’s mission on earth. This mission includes spreading God’s love to all people. As members of the Body of Christ, we are necessarily relational beings. For that reason, in order to reach fulfillment we must necessarily live in community with other people. It is our duty to promote a community of love and to avoid any divisions of that community. We promote this community through love and service to other people. In doing so, we come to love our God.
ENDNOTES

i Marc Oraison, Being Together; Our Relationships with Other People, 1st ed. in the U.S.A. (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1970), 15.

ii Thomas Merton, No Man Is An Island (Shambhala Publications, 2005), xv.


iv Beha, Living Community.

v Gen 1:27, NRSV


vii Ibid.

viii U.S. Catholic Church, Catechism of the Catholic Church, First ed. (Image, 1995), 360.

ix Gen 2:20, NRSV

x Gen 2:21-22, NRSV

xi Romans 5:12, NRSV


xiii John 3:16., NRSV

xiv John 1:29., NRSV

xv Ibid., NRSV

xvi John 6:38, NRSV

xvii John 14:6, NRSV

xviii Church, Catechism of the Catholic Church, 253.


xxi 1 Cor 12:12-14, NIV

xxii 1 Cor 12:15-20, NIV

xxiii 1 Cor 12:21-26, NIV

xxiv Lamirande, The Communion of Saints, 11.

xxv Ibid., 27.


xxvii John 17:21, NRSV

xxviii Church, Catechism of the Catholic Church, 813.

xxix Ibid., 831.

xxx Mt 28:18-20, NRSV

xxxi Church, Catechism of the Catholic Church, 857.

xxxii Ibid., 863.

xxxiii Ibid., 1153.

xxxiv Beha, Living Community, 6.

xxxv Church, Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1213.

xxxvi 1 Cor 12:13

xxxvii Romans 6:3-4, NRSV

xxxviii Church, Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1253.

xxxix Matthew 28:19-20, NRSV

xl Church, Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1271.
Bibliography


Bible, n.d.


