

'Marriage' according to Augustine

A theology of *Love* and *Communion*



Thesis Master Christianity and Society

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Preface

The idea to study Augustine's theology of marriage was the outcome of the college on the rule of Augustine by Prof. P.J.J. van Geest in the minor Christian Spirituality. The first acquaintance with this Churchfather made me curious to his writings and the professor suggested that I would investigate Augustine's idea of marriage. My wish was to study a topic not only in theological terms, but a topic that could teach us something and could be relevant for the world we live in today. The early Christian Churchfathers lived in a time before the main church dogmas were established. They discussed a variety of ideas and show us how these principles, laid down by the church as incontrovertibly true, started in a debate between scholars and a careful consideration of different aspects. Being an archaeologist, I was interested in the layers under the so called, established truth, and wondered why certain choices were made. I started my excavation or deconstruction of Augustine's marriage theology not at the top layers, but with the confrontation of the primary texts of Augustine on marriage. The encounter with Augustine's own texts is like a morning prayer. For a long period of time, I started my days with a few lines of Augustine. This encounter appeared to be a way to sharpen my eyes and ears and meet the Churchfather behind the texts, although ofcourse blurred by a post-modern mindset.

Augustine made me realize, that although we are individuals, at the existential level we are intrinsic social beings. The awareness that there is a community to engage and to love and that the choices we make are not only for our own benefit. In this modern time, it seems paradoxically, that in the relation with the other we can really find ourselves.

I would like to thank Arcadis to sponsor the last year of my study and give me the opportunity to finalize it. Especially my director Harm Albert Zanting, for his time to read the text and challenging me to make it relevant for a broader context than the strict theological one, and my colleague Eline Amsing for the grammar checking and her very helpful text suggestions. I also would like to thank my theology teachers for their inspiring lectures, conversations and discussions during the study, in particular dr. Willem Marie Speelman, Prof. Erik Borgman and Prof. Bert Blans (R.I.P). Finally, I wish to thank Prof. Paul van Geest, for his inspiring lectures on Augustine, for his supervision of every step in my study and for his endless patience.

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Introduction

Patristics is the study of Churchfathers and other early Christian writers. An important part of this study is to read and analyse their writings. To read texts that are more than a thousand years old and written in a period that is so different from today, is not only fascinating but also instructive and inspiring. What is most difficult, is to try to understand what the churchfathers mean exactly with their words. Are we capable of translating the texts into a storyline that we can understand today? Post-modern philosophers (Derrida, Heidegger) taught us that we are captured in our own prejudices and in the part of history we are in now. Therefore, we must be honest and understand that we will never really know what the Churchfathers meant to write. However, although our reading of the texts will be coloured, we can address the theological debates they wrote about and the discussions that are characteristic for the early Christian period.

Many of topics the Churchfathers discussed turn into dogmas in the centuries after, when the Catholic Church was growing in influence. Significant for these writings and debates is the wide range of ideas and arguments which reflects the period wherein the most important pillars of the Catholic Church still had to be formed. The strict rules of the Catholic Church of for instance the 20th Century, is in contrast with these early days of Christianity. Patristics can give us a point of view that at first seems quite far away from our (post)modern perspective. However, the Churchfathers lived in a time wherein Christianity was a minority, as it is again today. As such, the Churchfathers can provide us an alternative way of thinking, not yet influenced by the dogmas of the church or the overemphasised rationality of modern science. They could open our horizon and inspire us.¹

Augustine is one of the Churchfathers. He is remarkable for the extent of his oeuvre and extraordinary for what he wrote. His rhetoric style of writing is not to compare with familiar writings of today. His writings deal with many different aspects of Christianity and have inspired people from these early days onwards. The Churchfather is capable of arguing rationally on very different topics in an excellent way, while at the same time convincing the reader to follow him in arguments that he will consider from every possible angle to show that this is the only true Christian faith. This thesis will discuss Augustine's view on marriage and what we can learn from the communion in our (post)modern society.

The first part of the thesis concentrates on the primary sources. By reading the important texts and paragraphs in chronological order, the development in Augustine's thinking of marriage is analysed. Patristics is not only a study of texts in a chronological or historical way, it is a reading of the fathers. This demands a sense of understanding and openness for the deeper meaning of the text.² Starting with an intensive study of the original writings of Augustine on the word '*nuptiae*' creates a basis that is not (yet) intermingled with the reception of Augustine in later times.

The aim of this thesis is not only to study the writings of Augustine on the topic of '*nuptiae*' and to continue the reception on the topic, but also to analyse what we can learn from his marriage theology in a time that neither marriage nor Christianity is a cornerstone of society. All writings from Augustine where he mentions the word '*nuptiae*' have been studied for this thesis, with a focus on the following tractates: *de bono coniugali*, *de sancta uirginitate liber unus*, *de bono uiduitatis*, *contra Faustum manicheum libri triginta tres*, *de adulterinis coniugiis*, *contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum libri quattuor*. These texts show a more diversified image of marriage than we know from the Catholic

¹ Geest, van, 2009: 13-16

² Geest, van, 2009: 82-95

Church today. The chronological development of Augustine's marriage theology has been influenced by the discussion with critics in his own time. In his early works, he refers mainly to a spiritual marriage, the marriage between the Savior and those who will be saved. The discussion with the Manicheans leads him to argue that the good of marriage is to have children. This is the starting point for his tripartite good of marriage, *bonum proles*, *bonum fidei* and *bonum sacramenti*. In his arguments against the Donatists, Augustine tries to show that God already approved marriage in paradise, concluding that Adam and Eve did have sexual intercourse. In Augustine's discussion with the Pelagians he lays the basis for his theology of sin. Man is signed by fall and the power of lust can only be overcome by the love of God. Marriage is a remedy for those who are not able to live in abstinence.

Augustine's work could be characterized as a 'double hermeneutics'. To Augustine, words of the Scripture are like reading keys that refer to a higher reality. His interpretation of Paul 1 Cor 7:28 for instance, shows that he uses the literal meaning of the text but adds the 'spirit' of Paul in his interpretation and tries to influence and inspire his readers with this. The effect of this deeper sense or meaning that unfolds itself while reading and studying these primary sources, is that every part of the puzzle adds a little piece to the puzzle of Augustine himself. Although he does not write much about his own life when he talks about '*nuptiae*', from the rigorous or sometimes quite sharp argumentations you can feel both the struggle and the power or inspiration of this Churchfather in his endeavour to create a Christian theology within in a world of change.

The second part of the thesis will concentrate on the study of secondary literature about Augustine and the theology of marriage. Firstly, the context of the Jewish, Greek and Roman tradition is set to show how Augustine's theology of marriage is both conventional for the time he lived in and a radical new idea on marriage with the equal bond of man and woman as a fundament. Other early Christian fathers also struggled with the topic of marriage but none of them succeeds to create a balanced marriage theology as Augustine did, which would form the basis of the Christian marriage for the centuries to follow. After this first shift between old and new, before and after Augustine, this thesis will describe how the role of marriage changed in the development towards modernity, and how already in Scholasticism some essential choices were made regarding the origin of sin.

With the opening up towards society, a process that started with the second Vatican council and continues with Pope Francis today, we see that the role of marriage changed from the cornerstone of society into a diversified household where everyone has the right to live and love in the family of their choosing.³ To understand the post-modern attitude of deconstructing any statement about absolute truth, we will discuss the influence of Augustine on Heidegger and Derrida.

Finally, in the third part of this thesis, we will address how Augustine's theology of marriage can teach us something about human relationships. Certainly, Augustine did not address marriage as an answer to questions of our modern society, but we can portray the concepts of his marriage theology on modern day issues: by studying his marriage theology and his ideas of the first natural bond of human kind, we can learn something about man as a relational being. The communion of love and the encounter with the other in reciprocity, which Augustine describes in his theology, could be an example to the households we live in today, as Bennet suggests, and to every other 'modern' community. The holy Churchfather indeed gives us something to think about. Where economists and organisations search for the more soft and human skills to relate to each other in a

³ Rubio, 2003, in Bennet, 2008: 187

world dominated by the '*homo economicus*', Augustine described already in the first centuries after Christ how love can form the basis of a community.

Augustine and *nuptiae* - the facts

Nuptiae

The word *nuptiae* was used in Roman times to denote unity and partnership of two people for life. The generally symbolic union was denoted by the verb *iungere*, in many cases a synonym of *nubere*, indicating that the bride joined the bridegroom.⁴ When a woman got married, the expression was *nubere viro*, which means: “to marry a man”, but literally means: “to put on a veil for her husband”.⁵ It is in fact the wedding ceremony that is called *nuptiae*, derived from *nubere*.⁶ But at the same time it refers to personal law and, like the synonym *matrimonium*, was used to refer to the continuous state of being married.⁷ However, *matrimonium* (derived from *mater*) also expresses that the woman, as well as the children she would bear, shared the social status of her husband.⁸

Adjectives used with *nuptiae*

To have an idea of the context wherein Augustine uses the word *nuptiae*, the adjectives used in combination with the word *nuptiae* are informative. Most frequently used adjectives are *bonum*, *vero*, *sanctis* and *honorabiles*. This shows that Augustine sees *nuptiae* in the context of the good, the true, the holy and the honourable. The good and the honourable mostly refer to the marriage between a man and a woman. The true and the holy generally refers to the marriage between man and God. Apart from these examples Augustine emphasises with the regularly use of *institutas* that marriage between man and woman was originally designed by God. The adjective *damnenus* appears a few times in the discussion Augustine has with the Pelagians. Augustine tries to explain in this context that he does not condemn marriage; opposite to what the Pelagians accuse him of.

Nuptiae and *nuptiarum*

Augustine connects *nuptiae* as genitive (*nuptiarum*) especially with *bonum*, the good of marriage. This combination ‘*bonum nuptiarum*’ returns 41 times in the texts. This emphasises that it is very important to him to present marriage as a good. Although holy virginity is higher in rank, marriage is without doubt a good.⁹

Other words that appear with the genitive of *nuptiae* are *honestate* (9) and *laude* (8). This shows that marriage is not only good, but also honourable and praiseworthy. Then there are some combinations with the genitive of *nuptiae*, that appear not very often, but do give an impression of the value that marriage has according to Augustine. These are: *concupiscentiam* (5), *coniunio* (5), *castitas* (4), *iura* (4) and *sacramentum* (4). For Augustine *concupiscentiam* (concupiscence) belongs to mankind because the devil has wounded nature, desire is thus no characteristic of marriage, but it can find a safe place in marriage.¹⁰ The word *castitas* (chastity) in combination with *nuptiarum* is used to show that the marital chastity is very powerful and is a gift from God.¹¹ Augustine

⁴ Seneca, *Octavia* 694 in: Geest, van, 2012

⁵ Terentius Varro *De lingua latina* 4; Festus, *De verborum significatione* 5: ‘Unde nuptiae dictae sunt a capitis operatione’ in: Geest, van, 2012

⁶ Hersch, *Roman Wedding* 15-16. *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, 1207 (references to *nuptiae* as a ceremony) in: Geest, van, 2012

⁷ Ulpian, *Digesta* 24.1.32.13 in: Geest, van, 2012

⁸ Geest, van, 2012

⁹ See also this thesis ‘De bono coniugali’

¹⁰ *Epistulae Ecdicia*: 262; *Contra Julianum libri sex*: 2,38; *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*: 2,54

¹¹ *Contra Julianum libri sex*: 3,43

emphasises chastity as abstinence from sexual intercourse in marriage during for instance pregnancy and menstruation.¹² But he also talks on chastity in relation to the bond of trust and faithfulness between man and woman. Chastity makes the bond between two lovers stronger and shows even more that the sacrament of marriage is an image of the heavenly marriage between Christ and his church. The bond of husband and wife rises in faithfulness and love above the earthly things and touches the love of God.

Man and woman

Augustine mentions marriage thirteen times in the context of men, fourteen times in the context of women and twenty times when it comes to both. There is a difference in tone when he speaks of men. He is quite negative when it comes to men and the concupiscence that controls them.¹³ The remedy for this illness is marriage. A man must not commit fornication, but within the bounds of marriage his lusts will be forgivable.¹⁴ The sacrament of marriage is equal: man and woman are equal, and love brings them together: "Spouses, love your wife as Christ loves his church".¹⁵ A married wife is not allowed to have another man than her husband either, she is bound to her husband as long as he lives.¹⁶ Although holy virginity is a higher good, Augustine emphasises holding on to the choice that is made. An obedient married woman is better than a disobedient virgin.¹⁷ To Augustine, a wife that comes back on her choice can be compared to the wife of Lot, who looks back and changes in a pillar of salt.¹⁸ This is also the case for a married wife that reconsiders her choice to live in abstinence in her persuasion of a good Christian life. Augustine cites Paul the apostle: "women who do this, start a new promise, while they already have broken the first one".¹⁹ Despite the equality of man and woman within marriage, a wife must accept the authority of her husband.²⁰ A woman that is obedient in marriage will please the Lord.²¹ She should even admit to the marital act, so that her husband will not sin heavily by committing fornication.²² However, says Augustine, it is really not the character of marriage to ask a thing like this.

The first natural bond in the human community is the bond between man and woman.²³ Man and woman are one because of their marital bond and because the woman was originally created from the rib of the man.²⁴ Marriage between man and woman is good, despite the 'unreasonably and dirty things spouses can do with each other', that is an error of humankind that marriage can do nothing about.²⁵ And yet, the unity of man and woman with the goal of reproduction belongs to the good of marriage.²⁶ Children are in fact the good fruits of marriage and provide the continuity of the marital bond.²⁷ Man and wife even owe each other the marital act, as Augustine seems to say when he cites the apostle: "A wife does not have authority over her own body, but her husband has; such

¹² *Contra Julianum libri sex*: 3,57

¹³ *Contra Julianum libri sex* 3,43: Waarom zegen je de ziekte van lust, als je ziet dat een man er aan sterft tenzij het celibaat of het huwelijks geneesmiddel het tegenhoudt

¹⁴ *Ennarationes in psalmos*:75.16; *De bono coniugali*:12

¹⁵ *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*: 1,11; *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*:1,20; *De adulterinis coniugiis*:1

¹⁶ *Ennarationes*:75.16; *De bono uiduitatis*: 15; *Contra Faustum Manicheum*:15,1

¹⁷ *De bono coniugali*: 30

¹⁸ *Sermones*:96.10; *Ennarationes in psalmos*:75.16

¹⁹ *De bono uiduitatis*:13; *De adulterinis coniugiis*: 1,30

²⁰ *De bono coniugali*:14

²¹ *De bono coniugali*:14

²² *De bono coniugali*:11

²³ *De bono coniugali*:1

²⁴ *De Civitate Dei*:14,22

²⁵ *De bono coniugali*:5; *Contra Julianum libri sex*:2,33; *Contra Julianum libri sex*: 5,34

²⁶ *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*:1,5; *Contra duas epistule Pelagianorum*: 1,10

²⁷ *De bono coniugali*:1

as her husband has no authority over his own body, but his wife has".²⁸ And yet, not this bodily but the spiritual bond of marriage, the sacrament, is the most important. This bond between husband and wife is for life.²⁹ Even divorce will not separate this bond, according to Augustine. One could live apart, but will stay husband and wife for ever.³⁰ And although in years the fire of passion will decrease, in a good marriage love will holds its strength.³¹

Legal or Christian marriage?

Augustine refers regularly to the words of the apostle Paul: "The apostle says about marriage that a married woman is bound through the law with her husband as long as he lives".³² The statements of Paul about marriage provide to Augustine the basis of a Christian marriage. Like Paul, Augustine refers to the laws of marriage, for example when he mentions the Manicheans who detest sexual intercourse, while the laws of marriage approve it.³³ It shows that for Augustine the 'law' is important. However, if we look at his words in *Confessiones*, we see that he does not completely agree with the Roman version of marriage. When Augustine himself was ready for marriage, a suitable marriage partner was found for him. He had to wait for two years until she had the proper age for marriage. He had to part from his concubine, with whom he had been living for years and who also gave him a son. Augustine is very much affected by this and speaks of the wound in his heart and the blood that flows, because she was separated from him.³⁴ He wonders in *de bono coniugali* if the relationship with his concubine could have been called a marriage and concludes that if man and woman share their bed without the wish to have children, this certainly is a marriage if they promise each other faithfulness until death separates them.³⁵

The marriage of the patriarchs differs to Augustine in essential points with the Christian marriage. Like he states, the marriage of the patriarchs was ment to create offspring according to the flesh. Abraham could have several women, so that he would have many children. On the contrary, Christian marriage as Augustine stands for, is an act of respectful love where children will be begotten from the spirit.³⁶ The good of marriage exists to all people in creating offspring and the faith of chastity. The good of the Christian marriage, in addition, consists of the holiness of the sacrament.³⁷

Augustine, in fact, describes three types of marriage: 1. Legal marriage, 2. Christian marriage, 3. Holy marriage. Legal marriage is the contract between man and woman that takes place everywhere in the world. The Christian marriage adds the sacramental dimension, the bond between man and wife as an image of the marriage between Christ and his church or the holy marriage between man and God.

²⁸ *Epistulae Ecdicia*: 262

²⁹ *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*: 1,11

³⁰ *De bono coniugali*:7

³¹ *De bono coniugali*:4

³² *Contra Faustum manicheum libri triginta tres*:15,1

³³ *Contra Faustum manicheum libri triginta tres*:30,6

³⁴ *Confessiones*: 6,13,23/ 6,15,25

³⁵ *De bono coniugali*: 5,5

³⁶ *De bono coniugali*: 18, 19, 20, 21, 22

³⁷ *De bono coniugali*: 32

Analysing the way Augustine uses sources

Hermeneutics

Not only Augustine's interpretation of sources are of importance regarding his marriage theology, also his rhetoric texts and the way he affects and inspires his readers are characteristic for his work. This 'double' hermeneutics is interesting because it goes beyond only cognitive argumentation lines. Understanding the deeper meaning of a text is part of a long hermeneutical tradition that started in Early Christianity with Churchfather Origenes.

Hermeneutics is the theory and methodology of interpretation, specially the interpretation of biblical texts, wisdom literature, and philosophical texts. The term hermeneutics refers to the translation of a text, derived from the Greek word *ἐρμηνεύω* (*hermeneuō*) "to translate, to interpret".³⁸ In this context, truth is not the same as reality, there is as such a deeper layer in language. The hermeneut wants to meet the real meaning of the text. By looking beyond the own horizon, the reader leaves his or her own prejudices and becomes one with the inner meaning of the text, this is what is called a 'fusion of horizons'.³⁹

Post-modern philosophers try to investigate exactly this tension between subject and object. Me and the horizon against which I experience things. For Martin Heidegger, the consideration of a random object presumes that the subject can only describe the object with the starting point that they are in the same horizon, both object and subject are in fact not totally separated from each other. Jacques Derrida, like Heidegger states that one can, as a reader, not escape from the own horizon "*Il n'y a pas d'hors texte*" (there is no outside the text). The text itself is the only horizon against which everything takes place. The meaning of the text is thus not easily captured. The text asks for a translation, but the translation is in fact never complete. As a reader you could try to catch the identity, but the identity is continuously escaping.⁴⁰

In the 19th century, Wilhelm Dilthey defines a difference between the natural sciences and humanities. The natural sciences explain phenomena only as they appear to experience. Dilthey states that 'understanding of' is the key to human sciences and creates the hermeneutic triangle. Because, as he states, humanities should connect the relation between 1. Experience (*Erlebnis*), 2. Expression (*Ausdruck*) and 3. Understanding (*Verstehen*). The experience of the object can only be understood after it is reflected in expression by the subject. To have a 'sense' of the 'other' is the final step that is needed to come to an 'understanding of'.⁴¹ But as Albert Deblaere emphasises, the experience is sometimes very hard to express in a text. The highly spiritual experience of a mystic, for instance is difficult to express. Because the mystical experience rises above the human understanding, language is too limited to explain. Although we could say that it is only possible to grab a sense of the original meaning, the hermeneutic triangle does make it possible to understand something of the soul of a mystic. By studying passages of source texts, the real meaning of the text will speak for itself through the experience of the subject. The reader will come towards some kind of understanding only through the text itself.⁴²

³⁸ Pollman, 2007:206; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermeneutics>;

³⁹ Blans, 1988; 2009

⁴⁰ Blans, 1988; 2009

⁴¹ Geest, van, 2004

⁴² Geest, van, 2004

Allegorical reading

In the early Christian tradition (before the 4th century), the typical hermeneutic reflection was quite rare. The first to write on the interpretation of biblical texts is Origenes (ca. 185-253 AD). His fourth book of *De Principiis* explains the allegorical method for Scriptural interpretation. With the allegorical method the reader can find one or more hidden meanings behind the literal text.⁴³ The Christian reading practice can broadly be divided in three ways. In the Antioch tradition there is attention for the literal meaning and the historical dimension of the text. The Alexandrian reading method goes back to Origenes. Through the allegorical interpretation, the reader is initiated in the knowledge (gnosis) of Christ. The three main ways of interpreting the Scriptures according to Origenes' reading method are described as: 1. Literal sense (somatic or historical meaning) 2. Typological sense (the soul or moral sense) 3. Anagogical sense (spiritual sense). The third spiritual way to interpret the Scripture is also called *Lectio Divina*. This is a meditative and praying interaction with the Biblical text, that is characterized in four and summarized by the Carthusian monk Guigo II during the 12th century: *lectio* (read), *meditatio* (meditate), *oratio* (pray), *contemplatio* (contemplate).⁴⁴

Augustine's use and interpretation of Biblical texts are pre-eminently allegorical and inspired by the Alexandrian tradition. Because words can impossibly justify God's being and reality, to Augustine it is legitimized to understand words of the Scripture as reading keys, that refer to a higher reality.⁴⁵ To Augustine, the allegorical reading is not only the way to get to the inner reality of Biblical texts, it also helps man to search and escape from his unconscious way of being. The holy Scripture is God's revelation to help man further on his path. As such, the language of the Bible is as a bridge between God and man. Through the fall, man has been separated from God, but God's grace and His revelation through the Bible forms the basis for a Christian culture and are as such the instructions of our way to God.⁴⁶ The relation between the sign, 'res', and that what it refers to, the inner meaning, 'signum', is given and guaranteed by God. To come to a successful understanding of this inner meaning of the text is for Augustine connected inseparable with his theology of grace: a gift from God.⁴⁷

In Augustine's reading method, the inner meaning of the text is a continuous unfolding process, and in that sense a lasting revelation, wherein man can develop him or herself every time and can discover new 'treasures'.

Paul - 1 cor 7:28

*"But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a virgin marries, she does not sin. Yet those who marry will experience distress in this life, and I would spare you that."*⁴⁸

It is interesting in this respect to see how Augustine uses the quote 1 Cor 7:28 from apostle Paul to create a solid foundation for his marriage theology. The citation has been used by other church fathers, but was interpreted in very different ways. The idea of marriage was not only considered positive in the era of Augustine. Although the apostle Paul rejects every suggestion that celibacy was meant for all Christians, he does not succeed in giving a positive view on marriage and celibacy without any doubts or uncertainty. Valentin for example was positive on marriage, but Marcion the gnostic rejected marriage. Basilides and his son Isidore had a more tempered opinion wherein they preferred

⁴³ Pollman, 2007: 207

⁴⁴ Waaijman, 2000, hfst 2

⁴⁵ Geest, van, 2007: 62,65,66

⁴⁶ Brown, 2000: 257-260

⁴⁷ Pollmann, 2005: 221-231

⁴⁸ 1 Corinthians 7:28 New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (NRSVCE)

a celibate life but tolerated marriage on the basis of Paul's advice in 1 Cor 7. The same goes for Tertullian and Jerome. The main tendency at the beginning of the third century was the acceptance of marriage. The rejection of marriage became more and more classified as heretical. However, the discussion highlights some real negative tendencies in which also quotes of Paul have been used to invigorate the arguments.⁴⁹

For the apostle Paul, man is prone to sin because of his physicality.⁵⁰ The contradiction between body and mind and the sin of the uncontrolled human physicality are important themes for Paul. Paul's proclamation is about the end of an era and the creation of a new life, a new bond of man where the body will be directed to a spiritual life. Man will not be solely focused on his earthly needs but is called to reach out for a new future.

In this light, Augustine's interpretation of quote 1 Cor 7:28 as a means of giving a direction to people who cannot control their sins, is therefore not so unreasonable. From a hermeneutic point of view, it is interesting that Augustine adds three dimensions to his arguments when he uses the quote of Paul. First, he mentions the creation of offspring and the faithfulness of the spouses. Secondly, he sees the appreciation of marriage as good and thirdly, he describes the difference in meaning through the ages.

In his use of 1 Cor 7:28, Augustine uses the literal meaning of the text which forms input for his theology. However, he adds the 'spirit' of Paul in his interpretation. It is a twofold hermeneutic, he does not only try to enter the inner message of the author, he also tries to affect and inspire his readers. Augustine starts with the human inability and physicality, appoints this in sin, but offers a safe haven in marriage. Although like Paul, Augustine points out to a new era of a spiritual life and encourages his reader to move in that direction, he also gives the possibility of an alternative, namely marriage. Although the latter is part of the quote of Paul 1 Cor 7:28, Augustine does not portray marriage as a sin, but as a good.

Other important quotes or texts

Some other bible quotes that Augustine uses in his texts in context with the term *nuptiae* and to substantiate his marriage theology are:

Genesis 2:21-22 "So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man."⁵¹

Genesis 2:24: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh."

Augustine uses this quote specially to show that it is good for a man to get married.⁵²

Genesis 1:28: "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."⁵³

⁴⁹ Hunter, 2007: 88,89,102,113

⁵⁰ Romans 7:14

⁵¹ *Sermones*:123,2; *De Bono Coniugali*: I,1

⁵² *De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium libri duo*:1,23/2,53/2,54

⁵³ *De bono conjugali*: II,2; *De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium libri duo*:1,6/2,42; *Contra Julianum libri sex*:4,53

Luke 19:10: “For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost”.⁵⁴

This quote is for Augustine to emphasise the need for man to be saved and with it the original sin that man is being charged with until that time.

1 Timothy 5:14: “So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, and manage their households, so as to give the adversary no occasion to revile us”.⁵⁵

This is for Augustine an important quote in his arguments that marriage and creating offspring is a good thing.

*Romans 5*⁵⁶

Romans 5 is the text that Augustine uses to emphasise original sin in his discussion with the Pelagians. God created the world and everything upon it, but the devil inflicted a wound on nature. Especially Romans 5:12 and 5:17-18 are frequently used: “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”⁵⁷ and: “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”.⁵⁸ God created the world, the creation of nature was not done by an evil power as the Manicheans suggest. But through the trespass of the one man Adam, by his disobedience, all men will be sinful. Only salvation through the righteousness of the one man Christ, the sin of man will be taken away.

*1 Corinthians 7*⁵⁹

This text is frequently used by Augustine in his discussions on marriage. Especially when he wants to emphasise the good of marriage: “let him marry as he wishes; it is no sin. Let them marry” (1 Cor 7:36). In *Contra Faustum Manichean* Augustine uses this quote only once, but in *de bono conjugali* and *Contra Julianum* ‘1 Cor 7’ this is a frequently used text. It does not only show the good of marriage, but also the way husband and wife can deal with their physical needs within marriage. Sexual intercourse without the goal of creating offspring is a sin, but in marriage you could call this sin forgivable (1 Cor. 7:6). Augustine mentions in accordance with ‘1 Cor 7:4’ that in marriage a woman and a man have control over each other’s body. It is not allowed to decline sexual intercourse, so that Satan has no chance to deceive them for adultery (1 Cor 7:5), unless it is for prayers (1 Cor 7:3-6). Because praying and this physical activity are not to be mixed (1 Cor 7:29,5).

*Matthew*⁶⁰

In Matthew Augustine finds the words that connect marriage with God. The spiritual marriage, the holy commitment between Christ and his church, between God and humanity, is a symbol of the bond of man and woman in marriage. In *Enarrationes in Psalmos* Augustine emphasises that we are Children of Christ because we are children of the Bride (Mat:9.15), he also quotes Matthew 19.6: “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one

⁵⁴ *De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium libri duo*:2,42/2,56

⁵⁵ *De Bono Coniugali*: IX,9/XXIV,32

⁵⁶ *De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium libri duo*:2,3/2,37/2,42/2,45/2,46; *Contra Julianum libri sex*:5,32; *Sermones*:123,2; *Epistulae*:187,31

⁵⁷ Romans 5:12; *De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium libri duo*:2,3/2,37/2,42/2,45

⁵⁸ Romans 5:17-18; *De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium libri duo*:2,46

⁵⁹ *Contra Faustum manicheum libri triginta tres*:32,17; *De bono conjugali*:

IV,4/VI,6/VII,9/IX,11/IX,12/XIII,15/XVII,19/XVIII,21/XXIV,32; *De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium*:1,16/1,18; *Contra Julianum libri sex*:2,20/3,30/3,43; *Epistulae*:26,2

⁶⁰ *Enarrationes in Psalmos*:44,1/44,3/49,11/58,11; *De bono conjugali*: VII/XXI,25/, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium libri duo*:1,11/1,18/2,56/ *Contra Julianum libri sex*:1,40/2,3/2,33/4,33/4,38/4,65/5,66; *Sermones*:123,2; *Epistulae*:140,83/140,80

separate”.⁶¹ At the wedding of the Lord, not everyone is welcome: “the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, “Lord, lord, open to us.” But he replied, “Truly I tell you, I do not know you.” (Mat:25,10-12). Only those people that were ready went inside with Him, the others were left out.⁶²

⁶¹ *Enarrationes in Psalmos*:44,1/44,3

⁶² *Epistulae*:140,83/140,80

Development of Augustine's marriage theology

Nuptiae in Augustine's early work 388- 401

The term *nuptiae* appears in Augustine's work for the first time in the year 388. This is just after he was baptized in 387. Augustine speaks of *nuptiae* in *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus liber unus* (388) in the context of a spiritual marriage, the marriage with the Lord: "Those who were ready entered the wedding with Him".⁶³ In the work *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (392) Augustine uses the term *nuptiae* again in spiritual way, it refers to the sacred marriage between the Savior and those who will be saved: "Christ is the bridegroom and the church is His bride".⁶⁴ In this context Augustine connects wearing good cloths at the wedding, with being like the children, not in their immaturity but in their innocence. To wear the weddinggarment is to search for His honor and glory.⁶⁵

In *De genesi ad litteram libri duodecim* 401 Augustine goes in extensively detail into the literal meaning of Genesis and uses in this context in a number of places the word *nuptiae*. It is important to him that Adam and Eve were already honorably married in paradise. Creating offspring in paradise, he says, is like walking: "move your legs and you go forward". This is how Augustine suggests that Adam and Eve have begotten their sons without any feelings of lust.⁶⁶ Although excessive sexual activity is bad, marriage, even between oversexed persons, is good. The triple good of marriage makes the evil forgivable.⁶⁷

Nuptiae in Augustine's his antimanichean work

Augustine distances itself from the ideas of the Manicheans, who want to prevent their wives from having children, because then another godly particle of light will be captured in a human body. Augustine emphasises the contrary: marriage connects man and woman to produce offspring.⁶⁸ In *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus manicheorum libri duo* (388) Augustine reacts strongly on the ideas of Manicheans in the context of marriage: "who claims that bringing up children is a greater sin than sexual intercourse, does not make the wife a wife but a whore".⁶⁹ In 397 Augustine accuses the Manicheans in *Contra Faustum manicheum libri triginta tres* to violate the commandment 'thou shall not commit adultery'. The followers of Mani take precautionary measures, to refrain their wives from becoming pregnant, because the Manicheans, Augustine says, loathe having children in marriage. The union of a man and a woman in a Manichean way is unpure

⁶³ *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus liber unus* 59,2: et quae paratae erant intraverunt cum eo ad nuptias, et clausa est ianua

⁶⁴ *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 44,1/44,3: Cantatur enim de sanctis nuptiis, de sponso et sponsa, de rege et plebe, de Salvatore et de his qui salvandi sunt.....Huius nos filii sumus, quia filii sponsi sumus ...qui fiunt nuptiae qui invitantur ad nuptias; et ipsi invitati sponsa est. Etenim sponsa Ecclesia est, sponsus Christus

⁶⁵ *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 44,23: Hoc est habere vestem nuptialem, illius honorem, illius gloriam quaerere.

⁶⁶ *De genesi ad litteram libri duodecimo* 9,3,6: ut essent eis etiam in paradiso honorabiles nuptiae/ 9,10,18: ut sine ullo inquieto ardore libidinis, sine ullo labore ac dolore pariendi, fetus ex eorum semine gigneretur;

⁶⁷ *De genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*:9,7,12: Neque enim quia incontinentia malum est, ideo connubium, vel quo incontinentes copulantur, non est bonum: imo vero non propter illud malum culpabile est hoc bonum, sed propter hoc bonum veniale est illud malum; quoniam id quod bonum habent nuptiae, et quo bonae sunt nuptiae peccatum esse nunquam potest. Hoc autem tripartitum est; fides, proles, sacramentum.; See this thesis 'De bono coniugali'

⁶⁸ *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus manicheorum libri duo*:2,65: Nuptiae autem, ut ipsae nuptiales tabulae clamant, liberorum procreandorum causa marem feminamque coniungunt

⁶⁹ *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus manicheorum libri duo*:2,65: Nuptiae autem, ut ipsae nuptiales tabulae clamant, liberorum procreandorum causa marem feminamque coniungunt; quisquis ergo procreare liberos quam concumbere gravius dicit esse peccatum, prohibet utique nuptias, et non iam uxorem sed meretricem feminam facit, quae donatis sibi certis rebus viro ad explendam eius libidinem iungitur.

and only to satisfy their lusts. According to Augustine, the Manicheans take away the most important thing that makes a marriage a marriage.⁷⁰ Faustus, a noble Manichean with whom Augustine starts this discussion, accuses Jacob of lust and not of righteousness.⁷¹ According to Faustus, also Tamara is reprehensible, precisely because to her sexual intercourse was aimed at having a child. To Augustine, both Jacob and Tamara, are an example for every Christian. He states that Manicheans disapprovements of marriage laws is disapproval of marriage itself.⁷² In *Contra Felicem manicheum libri duo* (398), Augustine invigorates this by demonstrating that Manicheans see all sexual intercourse as a sin.⁷³ He wants to show the good of marriage and encourages to have children. Sexual intercourse as such is for Augustine not only not immoral, but also part of God's plan.⁷⁴

Nuptiae in Augustine's work on states of life

De bono conjugali

In the year 401, Augustine writes his first major work on marriage, in which he, in contrast to the Manicheans, demonstrates the good of marriage. *De bono coniugali* is the first of a tripartite of states of life that Augustine describes in the years to follow. Augustine starts the tractate with the statement that marriage goes back to the first natural bond of the human community: the bond between man and woman. Quite romantic he proceeds: "those who go their way together will go side by side, with their eyes focused on the same goal".⁷⁵ The 'friendship and brotherly bond' is for Augustine of great importance and, as he states in this tractate, creating offspring is no hard condition for marriage. Yet, children are the living continuity of this bond. Moreover, the bond of marriage would never have had such power if there would not have been a mystery or sacrament involved in this communion.⁷⁶ Augustine creates the foundation of his marriage theology in the connection between marriage and a tripartite good. Marriage is good because 1. it brings forth children in an honourable way and to raise children makes the parents grow (*bonum prolis*), 2. through mutual faith, partners can free a purifying power of love in each other (*bonum fidei*), and 3. the bond of Christ and his church is reflected in the bond between man and wife (*bonum sacramenti*).⁷⁷

The tripartite good is in a way a roadmap for spouses to grow into the unity of heart. The *bonum prolis* represents the (first) phase, in which young spouses regulate their passion, 'forgivable' and

⁷⁰ *Contra Faustum manicheum libri triginta tres* 15,7: quando id conaris auferre de nuptiis, unde sunt nuptiae?

⁷¹ *Contra Faustum manicheum libri triginta tres* 22,50: Hic vero ille, quem Faustus tamquam impudicum clausis vel potius extinctis oculis criminatur, si concupiscentiae non iustitiae servus esset

⁷² *Contra Faustum manicheum libri triginta tres* 22,64/30,6: Denique vos eum praecipue concubitum detestamini, qui solus honestus et coniugalis est, et quem matrimoniales quoque tabulae prae se gerunt, liberorum procreandorum causa

⁷³ *Contra Felicem manicheum libri duo* 1,7: Omnis concubitus fornicatio est, an concubitus cum uxore non est peccatum?; 1,8: Iam ergo quia ego respondi, iustum est ut tu respondeas ad quod interrogavi, utrum non dicas omnem concubitum esse fornicationem; 1,12: ad vestram professionem pertinere, id est, prohibitionem nuptiarum; quia omnem concubitum, et cum uxore, fornicationem esse dicitis

⁷⁴ *Contra secundinum Manicheum liber unus* 22: Neque enim tam concubitum, quam nuptias detestamini: quoniam in eis concubitus causa propagandi, non vitium, sed officium est: a quo immunis est continentia virorum feminarumque sanctarum; non quia sicut malum illud devitaverunt, sed quia melius elegerunt. Quamquam patrum et matrum, quales Abraham et Sara exstiterunt, ipsum officium coniugale non ex humana societate, sed ex divina dispensatione pensandum est.

⁷⁵ *De bono conjugali* 1: Lateribus enim sibi iunguntur, qui pariter ambulant et pariter quo ambulant intuentur

⁷⁶ *De bono conjugali* 7: Quod tamen si non licet, sicut divina regula praescribere videtur, quem non faciat intentum, quid sibi velit tanta firmitas vinculi coniugalis? Quod nequaquam puto tantum valere potuisse, nisi alicuius rei maioris ex hac infirma mortalitate hominum quoddam sacramentum adhiberetur

⁷⁷ *De bono conjugali*: 13.15; 17.19; 29.32;

good, according to Augustine, because it is combined with the longing for a responsibility of being parents.⁷⁸ *Bonum fidei* represents the phase wherein the fire of the passion has led to a bond of leniency and mutual faith. This is based on and expressed in the exclusive right on each others body, but specially refers to a good of the spirit.⁷⁹ If partners are forced by illness or old age, or if they choose voluntarily to focus on God through abstinence, then their marriage is as valuable as before.⁸⁰ Precisely in this phase, the spiritual bond, *bonum sacramenti*, will show the value of marriage. His suggestion to older people to abstain themselves ‘when the limbs slacken’, reflects the idea that human development is ideally aiming at a reinforcement of the spiritual bond, which, as he claims, is more intimate than the bodily bond.⁸¹ Despite the spiritual path, the bodily bond is presupposed: abstinence is not decent, or a higher good, if only one of the spouses pursues this virtue for the sake of individual perfection.⁸² In *De bono coniugali* Augustine presumes a bodily wellbeing of both partners as a fundament for the religious harmony (*concordia religiosa*) of marriage.⁸³

The marital fidelity that Augustine emphasises with *bonum fidei* refers to the spiritual bond between man and wife, but also to the mystery of the sacrament. That the patriarchs had multiple wives is, according to Augustine, explainable from the difference in times.⁸⁴ They lived in a time when it was important to bring forth children ‘to the flesh’.⁸⁵ From the same source of love “now the time has come”, Augustine said, “to bring forth children to the spirit”. Marriage between man and woman is for Augustine the prelude to the future of humanity, in unity and love on its way to God.⁸⁶

De sancta uirginitate liber unus

In *De sancta uirginitate liber unus* (401) Augustine frequently uses the term *nuptiae*. In particular to indicate the relation between marriage and holy virginity. Although in God’s law celibacy is higher than a marital status, married people are no less than virgins. According to Augustine, it is good to marry if you are not able to live in abstinence. We should not only preach celibacy, because virgins will be filled with pride.⁸⁷ Maria is honored for her virginity and for her motherhood at the same time. To us that is impossible. And yet, faithful married women are virgins and mothers of Christ in their faith that works through love.⁸⁸

⁷⁸ In *Retractionum libri duo* 2.22 stelt Augustinus dat een goed gebruik van een kwaad een goed is en een goede hartstocht dus geen negatief begrepen hartstocht is; *De bono coniugali* 3.3; 10.10; *De bono uiduitatis* 8.11; *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim* 9.7

⁷⁹ *De bono coniugali* 4.4

⁸⁰ Idem 9.9; 10.10; 13.15; 15.17; 16.18; 17.19; 19.22; 22.27; 26.34

⁸¹ *De bono coniugali* 9.9; *De sancta uirginitate liber unus* 12.12; 13.13; 14.14; 15.15

⁸² *De bono coniugali* 7.7

⁸³ Idem 13.15

⁸⁴ Idem 17: Nam tantum adfert opportunitatis ad aliquid iuste agendum seu non agendum temporum secreta distinctio, ut nunc melius faciat qui nec unam duxerit, nisi se continere non possit, tunc autem etiam plures inculpabiliter ducebant et qui se multo facilius continere possent, nisi aliud pietas illo tempore postulare.

⁸⁵ Idem 18: Eadem quippe vena caritatis nunc spiritaliter, tunc carnaliter propter illam matrem Ierusalem propagandi erant filii; sed diversa opera patrum non faciebat nisi diversitas temporum; 19: Nunc quippe nullus pietate perfectus filios habere nisi spiritaliter quaerit; tunc vero ipsius pietatis erat operatio etiam carnaliter filios propagare, quia illius populi generatio nuntia futurorum erat et ad dispensationem prophetica pertinebat.

⁸⁶ Idem 21: Sed quoniam ex multis animis una civitas futura est habentium animam unam et cor unum in Deum.... propterea sacramentum nuptiarum temporis nostri sic ad unum virum et unam uxorem redactum est

⁸⁷ *De sancta uirginitate liber unus* 1: Non solum ergo praedicanda est virginitas, ut ametur; verum etiam monenda, ne infletur.

⁸⁸ *De sancta uirginitate liber unus* 7: per hoc tamen cooperantur, ubi et ipsae virgines matresque Christi sunt, in fide scilicet, quae per dilectionem operatur

Augustine reads in the words of the apostle Paul a disencouragement to marry: "Yet those who marry will experience distress in this life, and I would spare you that"⁸⁹. Celibacy seems like a challenge, but marriage is, according to Augustine, a challenge too because of its jealous suspiciousness and the care for children.⁹⁰ And yet he favours people who live a celibate life to value their perfection higher than marriage, without seeing marriage as something bad. Those who choose to stay unmarried, should not run away for marriage as if it is a sin, but overcome the hill of less 'grandeur', to settle down at the higher mountain of holy virginity.⁹¹ As such, marriage is no sin, but at the same time not of equal status as celibacy.⁹² Marriage is good for those who have a lack of self-control.⁹³ A virgin, however, should never find itself better than other believers, she should be humble and give the most beautiful man of all, Christ, as much love as she would have given in marriage.⁹⁴

De bono uiduitatis

In *De bono uiduitatis* (414) Augustine summarizes his ideas on the relation between the states of life and the urgency of faith in each of them. He combines his reflection on abstinence as a gift from God, with grace as a foundation of the free will and the good order of life.⁹⁵ To the widows Augustine says that the bodily union that spouses owe to each other within a new marriage is forgivable, because it keeps from fornication. That is why a second marriage is not condemned, but only lower in honor. He speaks to the widows: "Do not blame evil on others but rejoice over the good you are receiving". For Augustine marital chastity is a good thing, but the abstention of widowhood is a greater good.⁹⁶

Augustine wants to give the three states of life, marriage (1), widowhood (2) and virginity (3) a place in society without judging one of them less than the other. He emphasises to everyone not to give up on whatever holy intention of ourselves or our beloved ones.⁹⁷ Therefore it is important to make a choice that suits, so that people can focus on the road they take instead of turning back later. Or as Augustine says: "To go after Satan".⁹⁸ It is an encouragement for the faithful Christian to persevere in the promise made to God.

⁸⁹ 1 Cor 7:28

⁹⁰ *De sancta uirginitate liber unus* 16: quam praenuntiavit eis qui eligunt nuptias in suspicionibus zeli coniugalis, in procreandis filiis atque nutriendis, in timoribus et maeroribus orbitatis.

⁹¹ Idem 18: Qui ergo sine coniugio permanere voluerint, non tamquam foveam peccati nuptias fugiant, sed tamquam collem minoris boni transcendant, ut in maioris continentiae monte requiescant.

⁹² Idem 19: qui non aequales perpetuae continentiae nuptias facerent, sed eas omnino damnarent

⁹³ Idem 21: qui se non continent, nuptias expedire tribulationemque carnis ex affectu carnali venientem, sine quo nuptiae incontinentium esse non possunt

⁹⁴ Idem 45: Sed cum ambae sunt oboedientes praeceptis Dei, itane trepidabit sanctam virginitatem etiam castis nuptiis et continentiam praeferre connubio, fructum centenum praeire triceno? Immo vero non dubitet hanc rem illi praeponere; 55: Haec quanti valeant cogitate, haec in statera caritatis appendite et quidquid amoris in nuptias vestras impendendum habebatis, illi rependite

⁹⁵ *De bono uiduitatis* 3.4-6.9; 8.11 (levensstaten); 17.21; 18.22 (genade en levensorde); 16.20 (vrije wil genade) (CSEL 41, 307-314; 315-317, 327-9, 331-2; 327-8)

⁹⁶ *De bono uiduitatis* 5/6: Et bonum est pudicitia coniugalis, sed melius bonum est continentia vidualis.

⁹⁷ *De bono uiduitatis* 19: deinde ut etiam tu ipsa non solum serves, quod vovisti, et in eo bono proficias, verum etiam diligentius firmiusque noveris, idem bonum tuum non a malo nuptiarum distingui, sed bono nuptiarum anteponi

⁹⁸ *De bono uiduitatis* 11: quas nubere voluit, melius potuisse continere quam nubere, sed melius nubere quam retro ire post satanam

Nuptiae in Augustine's antidonatic writings

We see that Augustine uses the term *nuptiae* for the first time in antidonatic context in his work *In Johannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV* (407). He emphasizes marriage as a spiritual communion with the church, and as such each liturgical celebration is a wedding with the church. The people that visit the wedding, can be portrayed as the brides.⁹⁹ In Augustine's vision, donatists will be refused to enter the wedding because 'those who search for their own glory' do not wear the suitable wedding garment.¹⁰⁰ The donatists saw themselves as the people fighting for the true faith. Catholics were, according to them, traitors. Augustine believed that this schism was based on a false interpretation of the message of Christ.¹⁰¹ Donatists regarded their church as an alternative to society. Augustine believed that the church could transform society.¹⁰² The right wedding garment, as Augustine writes, is the virginity of mind, in not violated faith, in solid hope and true love.¹⁰³ Marcellinus, Augustine's friend, led the conference in 410 between donatists and Catholics. The Catholics won.

Augustine's *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo paruulorum ad Marcellinu* (411) was written as a response to the controversy. Augustine indicated that the good of marriage does not exist in the bodily lust, but in the approved and morally good way to use that passion for the creation of offspring; thus, use the evil in a good way.¹⁰⁴ Augustine was stimulated by Marcellinus to write his monumental work *De ciuitate Dei* (413) to refute the pagan difficulties with Christianity.¹⁰⁵

Nuptiae in *De ciuitate Dei*

Augustine negatively expresses himself on the more traditional stories about the robbing of women through the Aeneads of Venus, when the gods made marriage agreements as motivation for their warfare. The ceremonies in honor of Liber were also disgraceful, according to Augustine. At the ceremony honourable housewives scratched male pubic parts in front of the crowd and at the wedding ceremony the newly married woman was forced to sit on the 'rod of Piriapus'. Augustine especially mentions the shame that is being caused by this, but also the fear that the arable land would be enchanted. To Augustine, both were difficult to accept.¹⁰⁶ Human shame awakes after the fall from paradise, with the loss of power over the own body. The blessing of marriage is, however, given to man already before the fall. It was before the fall that God gave his blessings to marriage: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it".¹⁰⁷ Because lust did not exist yet, the paradisiac marriage and the union to multiply would have looked different. Man and woman did not come together out of desire or lust, but from the will and blessing of God. Adam and Eve had control over their reproductive organs that they used for this goal only without any form of lust, like sowing the fields. Thus, marriage itself did exist according to Augustine already in paradise, although it wasn't characterized by the fight between will and lust.¹⁰⁸

Nuptiae in *De adulterinis coniugiis*

De adulterinis coniugiis is a synthesis of Augustine's ideas on the (reason to) divorce. The term *nuptiae* returns many times in this work, wherein he shows that it is especially the value of the

⁹⁹ *In Johannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV* :8,4/8,5/9,2; *In epistulam Johannis ad Parthos tractatus decem*:2,2

¹⁰⁰ *In Johannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV* :6,23/9,13

¹⁰¹ <http://vroegekerk.nl/content.php?id=16/>; *In Johannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV*:6,23

¹⁰² Brown, 2000: 220

¹⁰³ *Johannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV* :13,12

¹⁰⁴ *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo paruulorum ad Marcellinu*:1,57

¹⁰⁵ <http://vroegekerk.nl/content.php?id=16/>

¹⁰⁶ *De Civitate Dei*:3,13/7,24

¹⁰⁷ *Genesis* 1:28

¹⁰⁸ *De civitate dei*:14,21/14,22/14,23

communion of marriage that leads to God. Reason to write this piece of work were the ideas of Pollentius, who said on the basis of 1 Cor. 7:10-11, that a wife is not allowed to remarry if she left without adultery, and that someone, that send away his partner because of fornication, is allowed to remarry, without being accused of adultery. Although he adds to these statements that because women, contrary to men, could make use of the circumstances, tolerance of the adulterous partner is always better than a new marriage.¹⁰⁹

Augustine strongly rejects the first thought. To him, only adultery is a valid reason to separate. Otherwise one could leave the other to live in abstinence without approval, with or without bodily or spiritual adultery.¹¹⁰ The right on each others body, the right that guarantees and perpetuates the mutual faith and marital bond, would in that situation be taken away from the other.¹¹¹ This is unacceptable to Augustine, because the marital bond must before anything else be guaranteed. Therefore, he also disapproves abstinence from the partners without approval of the other, even if prayers form the motive: "it would make the other to an adulterer and be its downfall".¹¹²

In marriage the bond of communion is thus more important than the desire to individual asceticism and self-perfection.¹¹³ Pollentius' idea, that for the sake of appearance a woman should stay with her unfaithful husband, to Augustine is unacceptable. She could remarry, but then the blame stays on her while her husband would go free.¹¹⁴ Men and women should live according to the same rules, according to the explanation of Matthew 19:9 in the context of 1 Cor 7:4 and 1 Cor 10:1. In the Roman law a man may kill his wife if she commits adultery.¹¹⁵ A Christian is not allowed to kill his partner, instead, he should strive for forgiveness. And if, as Augustine says, the forgiveness of adultery cannot be accomplished through a life in abstinence, than it should be the necessity to raise children.¹¹⁶ Augustine wants to see the marital bond, based on equality between man and woman, perpetuated before anything else when he says, that when there are no commandments of the Lord, one must be advised by love, he adds: "Whoever sends away does good (because the Lord does not forbid it), who does not send away does better".¹¹⁷

Nuptiae in *De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium libri duo*

Augustine writes to Valerius, the governor of Africa *De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium libri duo* (419). This is in fact the prelude for the discussion with the Pelagians. The work is a response to a tractate of Julian, a follower of Pelagius, who writes to Valerius that Augustine condemns marriage on the basis of original sin. Augustine's intention is to show that there is a difference between the evil of bodily desire and the good of marriage.¹¹⁸ Marriage of faithful people leads to a good use of bodily desire. The good of marriage could not be lost through the evil of sin. Because marriage brings forth something good from this evil.¹¹⁹ It is not only offspring that makes marriage good, but also the sacramental bond between man and wife. This bond is for life, does not fall apart through divorce or through union with someone else and is so important that desire and lust within marriage are

¹⁰⁹ *De adulterinis coniugiis* 1.6.6

¹¹⁰ *De adulterinis coniugiis* 1.1.1; 1.III; 1.3.3; 1.4.4; 1.5.5; 1.6.6; 1.22.28; 1.23.29

¹¹¹ *Idem* 1.2.2; 1.5.5;

¹¹² *De adulterinis coniugiis* 1.4.4; *Contra Faustum manicheum libri triginta tres* 21.31: wat de sociale vrede betreft moet vrouw haar man gehoorzamen; maar inzake lichamelijke eenwording hebben ze gelijke macht over elkaar;

¹¹³ *De adulterinis coniugiis* 1.7.7

¹¹⁴ *Idem* 1.6.6

¹¹⁵ *Idem* 2,15

¹¹⁶ *Idem* 2,12

¹¹⁷ *Idem* 1.19.23

¹¹⁸ *De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium libri duo*:1,1

¹¹⁹ *Idem*:1,5/1,6/1,8

forgivable in order to avoid adultery.¹²⁰ That is why Augustine says: “do not say no to each other, unless for a while to pray and come back together again, so that Satan cannot tempt you to unchastity”.¹²¹ And yet it is not like bodily desire can be an attribute of marriage, it is only allowed to create offspring. Any attempts to prevent the creation of offspring are not allowed, Augustine says firmly: “then one is not a man and a woman, but a whore and adulterer!”.¹²²

Despite the good of marriage, marriage produces offspring charged with original sin. This is not a result of marriage itself, but of bodily desire and communion that cannot take place without lust. Therefore everyone of natural birth is bound with original sin. Only Christ is born without sin.¹²³ And only in paradise offspring could be produced without desire. Important to Augustine is that the devil is the author of sin, but not of nature, as the Manicheans see it. And yet he emphasises original sin because he wants to avoid that evil is neglected, as it would make salvation useless. “All children are good as far as they are the work of God, they are all born under the condemnation of the first Adam, unless they will be reborn in the second Adam, Christ.”¹²⁴ Pelagians have come, as far as Augustine is concerned, to ideas that are even worse than the Manicheans, as they believe that the fruits of marriage, children, do not need Christ as their physician.¹²⁵

Nuptiae in the anti Pelagian writings

The essence of Augustine’s criticism on Pelagius is that he prohibited the interpretation of the gospel as message of God’s grace. Pelagius emphasised namely the free will and the opportunity of man to find God at their own strenght. Augustine writes already in *De gestis Palagii liber unus* in 417 about Pelagius in the context of marriage. He mentions in particular his dissatisfaction with the response of Pelagius to virginity, as Pelagius is against the gospel and the church that value virginity more than marital fidelity.¹²⁶ From the year 420, Augustine continues the debate and writes *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum libri quattor* (420). In this work, Augustine again responds to a letter of Julian, who like Pelagius, values marriage the same as holy virginity.¹²⁷ In this letter, Julian adresses Augustine on various issues and accuses him of Manichean ideas. Because Augustine’s emphasise on original sin and the sexual union that, even within marriage, comes with lust and concupiscence, Julian concludes that according to Augustine children are born from a devil’s communion, which is marriage.¹²⁸ Augustine is driven into a complicated discussion. He wanted to emphasise the good of marriage, however not without the grace of God and salvation of sin. According to Julian, people are born by the communion of man and woman and have no sin. This is precisely what Augustine wants to prevent. Where is salvation, if we are without sin?¹²⁹

Augustine returns to the discussion extendedly in his work *Contra Julianum libri sex* (421) en *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* (429), of which the latter was unfinished when he died. In both works, the term *nuptiae* is frequently used. According to Julian, a tree should be judged by his fruits, so why should one listen to somebody that states only evil arises from marriage but at the same time concludes marriage is a good? Augustine however, states that marriage does not produce evil (this is

¹²⁰ Idem:1,10/1,11

¹²¹ Idem:1,16

¹²² Idem:1,17

¹²³ Idem:1,23/1,27

¹²⁴ Idem:2,15

¹²⁵ Idem:2,38

¹²⁶ *De gestis Palagii liber unus*: 3,29

¹²⁷ *Contra duas epistulas Palagianorum libri quattor*: 1,4

¹²⁸ *Contra duas epistulas Palagianorum libri quattor*:1,10

¹²⁹ Idem:1,30

what Julian accuses Augustine of) but grounded it. He emphasises that evil does not originate, as the Manicheans believe, from the first institution of nature.¹³⁰ It does not mean that nature was not seduced by the devil and has a role in marriage (that itself is good). This however, is due to the sin of the first man, that makes that all people must be saved. Only He, the born of a virgin, and now Augustine draws on Ambrose, is without sin.¹³¹

The Pelagians respect Ambrose. This is the reason that Augustine refers to him and takes his statements to give extra strength to his his own arguments. He even calls upon Pelagius to go into discussion with Ambrose.¹³² Ambrose emphasises that God is not only the creator of souls, but also of bodies. He warns us for the battle, against the mightiest powers in the air, and against our own lusts.¹³³ Based on his ideas about the free will, Pelagius is convinced that we can overcome our sins. For Augustine, sin is only resistable with the grace of God.¹³⁴

Without the honor of marriage, a human being is valued not more than animals, Augustine says, because: “then everyone would have community without distinction, like a dog”.¹³⁵ This differentiation is what makes the marital union good and makes that the concupiscence in marriage will be forgiven.¹³⁶ Augustine portrays marriage as a medicine and asks Julian why he accepts the medicine but not the disease?

The last point of discussion is that to Pelagius, Joseph and Mary were not really married, because they did not have sexual intercourse. Augustine in contrast to Pelagius, emphasises that marriage is not only the union of two bodies, because living in abstinence then could also lead to a divorce. The good of marriage certainly is present in the relation of Joseph of Mary and as such, according to Augustine, they were indeed married.¹³⁷ This is in fact in contrast to what Augustine said earlier in the context of the paradise of Adam and Eve. They were married, he stated earlier, because they had, although without lust or sin, sexual intercourse already in Paradise. The true bond between man and woman, between spouses, that Augustine wants to emphasise in his work, is thus not the bodily bond, but specially the spiritual bond.

¹³⁰ *Contra Iulianum libri sex*: 3,52/3,53/4,54

¹³¹ *Idem*:2,32

¹³² *Idem*:2,5/2,21

¹³³ *Idem*:2,32

¹³⁴ *Idem*:5,32

¹³⁵ *Idem*:3,16

¹³⁶ *Idem*:3,16/3,30

¹³⁷ *Idem*:5,46/5,62

Nuptiae in Epistulae

Augustine uses the word *nuptiae* in ten different letters. Four times he refers to it in a spiritual marriage with the Lord, in three letters he mentions the choice of the road to follow and emphasises that it is above all, important to choose and live that with honor. In the other three letters he refers to *nuptiae* in the context of sin and the evil of concupiscence and the good of marriage. A marriage with the Lord is a spiritual marriage wherein they who have true piety and true faith in their heart, enter with Him in joy and happiness. In the marriage between a man and a wife, the disobedience of bodily desire has been brought back to a forgivable sin. No one is born without the sin of Adam, but no one will be reborn without the spiritual grace of Christ.¹³⁸ One man wants to marry, the other chooses a life in abstinence. More important is that the choice for the one or the other has been made wisely and that one perseveres in the choice.

One letter gives the reader a very good impression of Augustine's marriage theology and how he shows people that marriage is good and is an image of the bond between man and God. In the 'letter to Ecdicia', Augustine answers a lady Ecdicia about her choice in life. She wants to give up her life as a married woman to live her life solely with the lord. Instead of encouraging this initiative to live a holy christian life, Augustine advises her to concentrate on the good she already has. Because even in her married life, her husband has agreed to live together in abstinence. But, as Augustine argues, now she disgraced him in dressing like a nun and giving away her possessions. Her husband has been driven in despair and committed adultery. Augustine suggests that Ecdicia makes her apologies and returns to her husband. Her individual desire for God should never be more important than the bond with her husband. "Would it not be much more beautiful", Augustine suggests her, "if she could walk the road to God together with her husband? And let her son grow up in love and God's wisdom?"¹³⁹

Nuptiae in Sermones

In his sermons, Augustine also uses the term *nuptiae* quite often. A view times we see that he uses the term again to encourage his listners to be faithful to their choice. In this he refers to the wife of Lot, she was condemned because she looked back. Therefore, Augustine says, make the choice that is good for you and continue that road. Forget what is behind you and aim for what is coming.¹⁴⁰ The spiritual marriage with the Lord is a subject that also often returns in his sermons, when he speaks of marriage. And in this, he refers to the wedding garment. He asks his listners, what they think is ment by the right wedding dress? Would that refer to the sacraments? Or to baptism? The fasting? Or to doing good works? "No", he says, "all these things can be done by good and by bad people". Augustine shows his listners in his typical rhetorical style, that the right wedding garment means love from a pure heart, a clear conscience and a true faith. As such, Augustine, when he talks about *nuptiae* in his sermons, does not encourage his listners to have faith or to be a good Christian, but encourages them to love. Love for God and love for the other, that is the right wedding garment.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ *Epistulae*: 184 A,3

¹³⁹ *Idem*: 262

¹⁴⁰ *Sermones*: 96,10

¹⁴¹ *Idem*: 90,5/90,6/90,8/90,9

Conclusions

The term *nuptiae* in Augustines work returns 937 times, quite an amount that shows that it is important to him. When we look at the chronology, we see Augustine's marriage theology developing in time, not in the least because of his discussions with critics. His marriage theology brings him to some critical statements on Christian theology and a good Christian life. In the early work in *De diversis quaestionibus octaginta tribus liber unus* and *enarrationes in psalmos* we see Augustine referring to the spiritual marriage of the Lord and emphasising the right wedding garment. In these years he also tries to distance himself from the Manicheans. In his anti-Manichean writings, he means to say that the Manichean way to look at sexuality is unpure and only for lust. They portray marriage and having children as something bad, because it captures godly particles in an earthly life on the contrary. Augustine argues, that the good of marriage is to have children. In *De bono coniugali* Augustine continues on the good of marriage and elaborates his tripartite good of marriage. The good of marriage is 1. *bonum prolis*, creating offspring and educating children raises the parents, 2. *bonum fidei*, mutual faith can free the purifying power of love in each other and 3. *bonum sacramenti*, is as such the image of the bond between Christ and His church.

In the same period, he writes *De sancta virginitate liber unus* in which he argues that although marriage is good, holy virginity is better. Interesting in his writings is the careful structure he chooses to refrain people from thinking that marriage is 'not good enough'. He starts *De bono coniugali* with referring to the first natural bond of human community between man and woman. At the same time, it is of less 'grandeur' than holy virginity. The balance that Augustine tries to find in developing his three states (good of marriage, holy virginity and the excellence of widowhood) of life is important. It indicates that he wants Christianity to be part of the whole society. It should not be limited to only a few people. We also see Augustine defending this Christianity in the discussion with Donatists. He emphasises in *In iohannis evangelium tractatus* the spiritual communion with the church and refers to the wedding garment as the virginity of mind, in solid hope and true love, that is meant to everyone. To create a secure foundation for the 'good of marriage' he tries to show that God already approved marriage in paradise. In his work *De civitate dei*, he uses the bodily communion of Adam and Eve to prove that God has given his blessings to marriage even before the fall. They had sexual intercourse but, without any feelings of lust.

From the year 417 onwards, Augustine gets involved in a controversy with the Pelagians. It is Julian, a follower of Pelagius, that accuses Augustine of regarding marriage as a devilish institute. In *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, Augustine argues that it is not marriage where the devil has influence on, but lust in the bodily communion of man and woman. In paradise, Adam and Eve could create offspring like sowing a field, without any malefic feelings of lust. With the fall, the devil created a wound in human nature. This power of attraction, this fire of desire can only be overcome with the love of God. In marriage, this evil is used in a good way, with having children that can grow up in love. It is important to notice that the discussion with the Pelagians is linked to the discussion on original sin and free will. When Pelagius says man is free to choose, Augustine brings in original sin. Man is signed by fall and can only be freed by the grace of Christ in baptism and in faith. In Augustine's marriage theology, we see how he reforms this evil wound of man into a threefold good. He designs a community of love, where a safe environment is created for human development. An intrinsic good community of love.

Marriage in Early Christianity

The marriage relation in Jewish, Greek and Roman tradition

What we know of marriage and the relationship between husband and wife in the Jewish and Greek traditions is coloured by the role of women in society. In Judaism in the first century AD, women are inferior to man. Juridical rights of Hebrew women are very limited. At first, they are subjected to the authority of their father, thereafter to the authority of their husband.¹⁴² The Jewish tradition goes far back in time and arises from the Greek tradition. Exclusion of women from active participation in the political life and a strong limitation in jurisdiction was standard. Aristotle states that in the male/female relationship, the female is inferior. He even suggests a graduated scale of values at the ontological level between the male and the female in being essentially different in relation to virtue, temperance, justice and fortitude.

In the Roman empire women were seen as failed males. Their lack of heat made them more soft. For the man there was always the danger around that the heat would leave him, leading a man to approach the status of a woman with a 'softness' that could betray him. This fear of losing the 'vital male spirit' lays at the root of many late classical studies to the male body. The most vital man of all was the man who had kept most of his vital spirit, that is the one who lost little or no seed. For Olympic athletes it was even thought that castration made them stronger.¹⁴³

Not only at the body level, also in the family itself women were under the rule of the pater familias. The word familia, in classical usage, denoted strictly all those persons and even all things which were under the power of the same pater familias. In the ancient forms of marriage, a woman was transferred from her own family into her husband's, this was called a transfer of manus or a manus-marriage. Although this practice was disappearing at the beginning of the Christian era, it was still very common in the second century and shows the marriage relation between a man and a woman. A woman who was in manu to her husband, was under his power and in legal status equivalent to that of a daughter. In a free marriage the wife was not under the power of her husband and there were no rights of interstate succession between the parties. Only the children were in their father's power from birth.¹⁴⁴

There are also more positive influences on the role of women. The Socratic principle, for instance, starts from the substantial equality between man and woman. In this, Socrates emphasises the capacity for virtue and the development of women.¹⁴⁵ The Stoic tradition also shows a more balanced view on the relationship between man and woman and sees a marriage union as the greatest and most profound *koinōnia* which can exist in human life. Intercourse was supposed to take place only so as to produce children. Plutarch of Chaeroneia, a Greek philosopher from the first two centuries A.D., mentions that no union is so complete as that which *erōs* realizes.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Gasparro, (et al.; eds), 1999: 32-36; referring to the work of Flavius Josephus "Against Apion".

¹⁴³ Brown, 1989: 6-21

¹⁴⁴ Reynolds, 1994: 10-15

¹⁴⁵ Gasparro, (et al.; eds), 1999: 38-44

¹⁴⁶ Idem: 42-56

In the Jewish tradition there are some communities that lived under a vow of celibacy, like the sect of the Essenes, settled at Engeddi near the Dead Sea. They renounced all sexual desire and no women were allowed. The writers of the Dead Sea scrolls insisted, already like Augustine did later, on monogamous marriage as a renewal of the undivided union of Adam and Eve.¹⁴⁷

In classical times and still common in the Roman Empire of the first centuries AD, it was presupposed that marriage existed for the sake of procreation and educating children. Marriage was above all, the source of legitimate heirs. Concubinage was another form of a stable monogamous sexual relationship, but the offspring was illegitimate. The woman in a concubinage was normally socially inferior to the man and in some sense his servant. The concubinage was acceptable for the married man, but not for the married woman. Where according to the law, adultery was a crime committed when a married woman had a sexual relationship with another man. A man's having a sexual relationship with a woman other than his wife was not in itself a crime. We see that from the Christian point of view, the double standard was unacceptable.¹⁴⁸

Augustine also refers to the Roman marriage, where a man can have a concubine until the right marriage partner is found. Augustine is quite critical on men and refuses to continue this double standard, although it was part of his own life.¹⁴⁹ The Christian marriage, as Augustine describes it, is based on the equal bond between man and woman, the bond of love.¹⁵⁰ As Augustine states in *De bono coniugali*: "The man who takes a wife for a while to marry another in the end, commits adultery in his heart".¹⁵¹ Here we see how Augustine's marriage theology was as a witness of his personal life and shows how he was also formed by the existential moments in his life. The breakup with his concubine, was one of these moments.

Early Christian churchfathers and marriage

An introduction

The discourse of the churchfathers on the role and modality of the man/woman union is formed by three kinds of sources. Firstly, they all use the Genesis data; the biblical text on the creation of mankind. Secondly, the interpretation of these texts can be placed within certain exegetical traditions. And thirdly, which is linked with the previous, the cultural background of the individual fathers influences the way they think and write. The biblical texts relating to the creation of man is composed of two narratives, which some scholars use as a basis for two 'creation' moments. For example, Philo of Alexandria talks about the 'spiritual creation in the image' and the 'physical creation' of Adam. In Genesis 1:26 the singular human being was created and in Genesis 1:27b the sexual distinction of male and female evokes.¹⁵²

The patristic tradition also distinguishes a "first creation" and a "second creative act" which respectively places the phenomenon man in a being and created Eve as a helper being derived from his own body in Genesis 2:18-23. This creative act was followed by the condemnation, the announcement to Eve of the sufferings connected with child birth. The domination over Eve by her

¹⁴⁷ Brown, 1989: 38- 41

¹⁴⁸ Reynolds, 1994: 15-38, 122-123

¹⁴⁹ See also this thesis: "*Legal or Christian marriage?*"

¹⁵⁰ *De fide et operibus*:10

¹⁵¹ *De bono coniugali*:5

¹⁵² Gasparro, (et al.; eds), 1999:2,3, 7

husband turns out to be very essential to the churchfathers and the image they have of women. To reinforce their arguments, about women as the helper of man, they use the Apostle Paul as an unquestionable authority. Not only because 'she' was chronologically created after 'him' and 'she' has been made out of 'his' body, the condemnation and the idea that Eve took the first step in sin was enough for a profound imbalance in value between the two sexes.¹⁵³

The fathers in their role of influential representatives of the great church interpreted the gnostic tradition with abstention from and condemnation of marriage as ideal, in contrast to God's positive creative act. The gnostic tradition also influenced some churchfathers with a more radical Christian ideal. In the early Christian tradition, there were mainly three motives in the ideas on marriage:

- a. The radical one, in which the repudiation of marriage forms a necessary condition for the realization of the Christian ideal.
- b. A more moderate form, in which virginity and continence are accompanied by a recognition of the liceity of marriage.
- c. Marriage as post-fall institution, permitted by God as a remedy for concupiscence and to guarantee the children.¹⁵⁴

Authors like Tertullian and Origen were involved in lengthy and intensive polemic against the encratics and gnostics. Augustine has, as we have seen, a long and extended polemic against Julian, but he never makes any concession on the principle of the intrinsic and original goodness of the practice of marriage. In early Christianity the ideas on marriage can be seen in a range from radical repudiation to a more moderate view in which marriage is permitted. On the holy virginity there is more agreement, because all fathers see virginity and continence exalted as a higher and more perfect form of realizing the religious ideal of the Christian.¹⁵⁵ Because Augustine has been influenced by some of the fathers, and to give an idea of the man/woman relation in the first centuries AD, the fathers and their ideas are presented below.

Tertullian

Tertullian was born in Carthage between 150 and 160 AD and represents one of the most significant testimonies of the encratic tradition. He had a lot of influence on Christian authors, for example on Jerome. Although he has a moderate point of view on marriages, as he does recognize the liceity of the practice of marriage and even defends the goodness of marriage, his arguments are extremist in tone. He was a Stoic, with a rigorous insistence on the control of the body. Suspension of all future sexual activity, he thought, would bring down the gift of the spirit. To him there is a strong connection between Eve and the actual women with sin. He is convinced of the natural subjection of the woman and her own finalization through man, on the authority of Paul (1 Cor:8-9). He also affirms that all women should wear veils on their heads.¹⁵⁶

Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria, born around 150 AD is deeply rooted in the Greek philosophical tradition and in the typical horizon of the Alexandrian tradition influenced by the image of the 'true gnostic'. He was the first author in Greek to treat the subject of matrimony in a balanced way. Although he has no radical renunciation of the world, he distances himself from passions. To him the practice of marriage should exclude all passionate and irrational elements and finds its proper end in the legitimate procreation of children. To Clement, marriage is revealed as a necessary dimension of the

¹⁵³ Gasparro, (et al.; eds): 18-26

¹⁵⁴ Idem: 60-65

¹⁵⁵ Idem: 66

¹⁵⁶ Idem: 75-77, 147-153; Brown, 1989: 77

social nature of man. Interesting is that to him the equality of man and woman exists only at spiritual level. The difference between man and woman, with the husband being the head of the woman, is an earthly one. A true, 'holy Christian marriage' thus ritualizes the mystical 'one' between Christ and the church. In his writings there is a sense of God-given importance of every moment of daily life and especially of the life of the household.¹⁵⁷ As he writes in the *Stromata*: "For nothing is in fact better and more excellent than when a husband and a wife both live in a house, harmonious in your sentiments."¹⁵⁸

Origen

Origen was born in 185 AD and died like his father as martyr. Origen insists on bringing the moral teaching, the 'soul' of Scripture, the spiritual meaning of the divine word. Not only the choice of marriage or celibacy but Origen's whole anthropological and cosmological vision is structured around his scheme of 'double creation'. In this he tries to formulate a rationally coherent explanation, influenced by Greek platonic philosophy. The first creative act by God is the creation of all rational creatures, all equal and an image of God. The second creative act furnishes material support to creatures. Humanity as such is made up of rational beings with a material body and a rational soul. The nuptial practice from this point of view is to Origen tied to a double decadence: 1. The creature of pre-existence enters a cosmic and bodily-material dimension. 2. Humanity derived from the primal couple who have transgressed a divine precept. Despite this rational scheme and the double decadence, Origen does not reject marriage. As he says, "it is better that the two be saved by living in matrimony than because of one, the other should mislay hope in Christ". And referring to Apostle Paul, he says that he did not condemn marriages, nor did he, in preferring marriage, condemn virginity. But, he was convinced that the time would come when all relations bases upon physical kinship would vanish. As such he was also sharper on marriage than Clement, in his opinion that married intercourse actually coarsened the spirit.¹⁵⁹

Ambrose

Ambrose, born in a powerful aristocratic family in 339 AD, was Roman governor of Liguria and Emilia before he became bishop of Milan in 374. One of his first acts after he became a bishop is to donate his own goods, mobile and immobile, to the church. His ideas were influenced by Philo and Origen and he spend a lot of time on the struggle against the Arians. For him Eve represents the emotions of the first woman and Adam exists as *nous* (mind). Sin was committed by man because of the pleasure of sense. The figure of the serpent stands for enjoyment and the figure of the woman for the emotions of the mind and heart. As such, he sees the superiority of man above woman, but emphasises that without Eve, the creation of Adam had not been judged 'good'. About divorces he is especially strict to man. They are not allowed to divorce their wives. Although it is not prohibited by civil law, the divine law forbids divorce, because "what God has joined let man not separate"¹⁶⁰. He also brings in the theme of love and fidelity in marriage as an harmonious relationship of tenderness and understanding.¹⁶¹

Jerome

Jerome was born in 331 and went to Rome as a student. In his later years he departed to Palestina and starts a monastic community in Betlehem. He leads a group of women in a community of virgins living up to an ascetic ideal and he dedicates all his writings to them. He creates a systematic

¹⁵⁷ Idem: 78-83, 159-179; Brown, 1989: 124-135

¹⁵⁸ *Stromata* IV 59: 1-63, 3 in: Gasparro, (et al.; eds), 1999

¹⁵⁹ Gasparro, (et al.; eds), 1999: 83-89, 179-187; Brown, 1989: 161-173

¹⁶⁰ Ambrose: Exposition of the Gospel of Luke VIII: 3-6, in: Gasparro, (et al.; eds), 1999

¹⁶¹ Gasparro, (et al.; eds), 1999: 93-95, 209-217

defence of the ascetic ideals in his writings. Apart from his polemical disputes he was especially linked to his revision of biblical text and the translation of the Bible in Latin. In his polemical tracts he defends the superior dignity of the virginal state. To him, marriage is a compromise with human decadency. The real message of the gospel is the ideal of virginity. The human body according to Jerome, remained a darkened forest, filled with the roaring of wild beasts, that could be controlled only by rigid codes of diet and by the strict avoidance of occasions for sexual attraction. Marriage gives moral worries and material troubles. Nevertheless, Jerome does not forbid marriage. Influenced by Origen and based on 1 Cor 7, Jerome confirms the natural aspect of the sexual component of marriage, but any pleasure ought to be excluded and the invitation is to perfect continence, marriage is for the imperfect ones. He emphasises in the man/woman relationship, especially directed to men, that should be based on love; “because he who loves his wife loves himself, so also let us love our own wives”.¹⁶²

Paulinus of Nola

Paulinus of Nola was born around 353 AD. He married Theresia from Spain and converted to Christianity around 389. Their son died eight days after his birth. After that, both spouses entered into ascetism and lived a spiritual marriage. Paulinus practices what he preaches. In his writings he encourages a dedication to the religious ideal on the part of two spouses through the abandoning of sexual relations. The alternative is having children. Paulinus emphasises that spouses are free to choose. The spiritual union is a bond of total dedication and affection. It reflects the indivisible unity of the first couple. To Paulinus, continence is an instrument of the woman to abolish the status of submission as a consequence of sin.¹⁶³

John Chrysostom

John Chrysostom was born in Antioch between 344 and 354 AD. After being baptized he dedicated himself to an ascetic life. Therefore, it was important for him to find a good balance in his writings between the ascetical tensions, continence and virginity, and the value attributed to marriage. Adam and Eve were without desire, he says, but the fall brought the pair in corruption inherent in physical reality and in death. In their wake came marriage. The relationship between man and woman is not equal, submission on part of the woman becomes necessary after sin, he states. But, interestingly, he also searches to a balance in this context and suggests that a woman should transform into a man, not physically, but spiritual. He states that the wife has a role different from the husband, but they are essential equal. She overcomes her own nature by elevating herself to the virtue of holy man. Although this could sound unbalanced today, John Chrysostom had a view on nuptial reality in which the individuals meet with a dignity substantially equal to each other. In fact, before the act of disobedience in paradise, woman had equal honor as man.¹⁶⁴ The relationship should be grounded on the mutual affection of the spouses in which love and fear find a terrain for a harmonious union between the two. He names it a sharing life in which the distinction between ‘mine’ and ‘yours’ no longer exists. This is the mystery of marriage, that the two persons become one. And the child, he says, is like a bridge, so that the three become one flesh, the child connecting on either side, each to the other.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Gasparro, (et al.; eds), 1999: 97-102, 231-241; Jerome: Comm on the Epistle to the Ephesians III: v29, in: Gasparro, (et al.; eds), 1999; Brown, 1989: 376,377

¹⁶³ Gasparro, G.S. (et al.; eds), 1999: 114-116, 281-285

¹⁶⁴ John Chrysostom, On Genesis IV:1, Gasparro, (et al.; eds), 1999

¹⁶⁵ Gasparro, (et al.; eds), 1999: 117-124, 305-315

Marriage into Modernity

Introduction

In the history of the church, the role of marriage changed little. The influence of Augustine's first major theology of marriage is enormous. The reading and interpretation of his texts, however, is very much bound to the specific time. In the last century we see that, due to the development towards modernity, the status of the marriage community in North West Europe has changed rapidly. The urbanization and the industrialization in Western Europe brought major social political and economic changes together with a specific form of consciousness. The modern life strategy was not a matter of choice, but one of a rational adjustment to totally new life conditions. The invention of machines and the belief in progress, produced a basic egalitarianism in which the major influence of the church, but also the religious attitude or the believe in a transcendental origin disappeared for most people.¹⁶⁶ In fact, modernity is the outcome of a development that already started in the Enlightenment and the Reformation. More specifically, with Kant's distinction between faith and knowledge.¹⁶⁷ As objective and secure knowledge is the aim of modern science, it leaves little space and time for worrying about any ontological insecurity. Even death is no longer a momentous happening in the existence of another or longer duration, it is merely the 'end of a story' and even partly a manageable occurrence.¹⁶⁸

Urbanization and industrialisation changed also the role and the image of marriage. In the modern society, marriage no longer has the status of the cornerstone of society and people are free to marry, to divorce and to live together in various households without marrying at all. Before the Second Vatican council (1962-1965), marriage was no free choice, it was the only accepted community apart from the life in abstinence in a monastery or as clerical. In the Encyclical *Casti Connubi* from Pope Pius XI, we recognize this as 'old fashioned' and from a modern point of view, as a repressing atmosphere. To understand the origin of this more negative sexual morality it is helpful to analyse the role of scholasticism in relation to Augustine's marriage theology and the role of original sin.

Scholasticism and marriage

Man has been disobedient against God. According to Augustine this disobedience has been punished with disobedience of the will. The control of the sexual organs as it was possible for Adam and Eve in Paradise, he states, disappeared as a result of this. The scholars of the Early Scholasticism continued Augustine's 'paradisely ideal' at first, but at the end of the era the idea that sexual desire did not exist in paradise was given up, mainly under the influence of Peter Abelard.¹⁶⁹ In High Scholasticism the existence of lust in paradise was fully accepted. The question even arises if lust in paradise had been worse? But, as scholastic scholars concluded, through the grace of innocence the control of sexual desire was stronger in paradise. With this, the physiological fact that sexuality, including sexual drives, already existed in paradise and was as such accepted as the work of God, contrary to Augustine's theology of sin.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Bruce, 1998:26, Bauman, 1998: 62

¹⁶⁷ Bruce, 1998:30, 1998:30,31; Bauman, 1998: 68;

¹⁶⁸ Bauman, 1998:60,62,63,67,68

¹⁶⁹ Müller, 1954: 275-277

¹⁷⁰ Idem: 277-279

Another interesting theological development going into High Scholasticism is that although lust existed already in paradise (according to these scholars), it became more and more acknowledged that lust was a deadly sin, instead of a venial sin like Augustine argued. A double image of sin developed whereby lust in paradise has been argued as unintentionally and therefore without real guilt, but the sexual act for instance in marriage as voluntary and sinful. In this way lust became labelled more and more as impure and unclean.¹⁷¹ Sexual intercourse as such was not bad, it was, in line with the theology of Augustine, the duty of the spouses not to refuse one another, but any lusty feeling that accompanied this to satisfy one's own desire, was classified as deadly sinful. The objectification of the range of lustfeelings and the classification of the degree of sin aligned with that, is exemplary for the way Scholasticism marked the discussion on sin and sexuality. Where Augustine stated that lust, according to his theology of original sin, originated after fall and as a result of inobedience, he did classify sexual intercourse including sexual desires as a forgivable sin. In Scholasticism somehow the negative sexual morality and the emphasis on feelings of lust as a deadly sin, created the line of thinking for the centuries to come and are still very much recognisable in the beginning of the twentieth century. The love from person to person as a mirror of God's love is herein moreless ignored.¹⁷²

Pius XI, *Casti Connubi*, On Christian marriage

The encyclical *Casti Connubii* ("On Chaste Marriage") of Pope Pius XI in 1930, is very much influenced by Augustine's marriage theology.¹⁷³ This work does not only refer to Augustine's three goods of marriage, but also emphasises the importance of marriage based on the fact that God created it.¹⁷⁴ For Pope Pius, the souls of the contracting parties are joined and knit together more directly and more intimately than their bodies.¹⁷⁵ In a way, Pope Pius XI resembles Augustine in his positive testimony of marriage. But it also shows the spirit of his time. Augustine helped to create the dogmas of the church, the fundamentals of Christian Theology. In 1930 the Catholic Church had a totally different status. Human being as being sinful above all appears to be the statement of Pope Pius XI. After the nomination of marriage as a tripartite good, referring to Augustine, there is a list of evils that are opposed to the benefits of marriage.¹⁷⁶ The list describes the different evils that oppose the good of marriage. For instance, to avoid offspring and the destruction of the offspring begotten, but unborn. In addition, all sensual affections and actions with a third party. Regarding separation and divorce, they should not be tolerated but also sanctioned by the law. Mixed marriages are out of question and forbidden. In a way these evils are familiar, they are Augustine's heritage. But the tendency to make the list and the explanation of the list longer than the positive part of marriage, gives a quite repressing atmosphere in which marriage is not a possibility but merely a forced institute for all non-celibate people. In the conclusion Pope Pius XI confirms this frustration, writing that although he admires what the Creator has ordained with regard to human marriage, he also expresses his grief that such a pious ordinance is frustrated and trampled upon by the passions, errors and vices of men.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷¹ Müller, 1954: 280-288

¹⁷² Idem: 288-318

¹⁷³ Clark (ed), 1996: 1

¹⁷⁴ Pius XI, 1930: 9

¹⁷⁵ Idem: 7

¹⁷⁶ Pius XI, 1930: 53-82

¹⁷⁷ Pius XI, 1930: 93

Second Vatican Council – *Gaudium et Spes*

The second Vatican council that started in 1962 tried to open up to society and address the relations between the Catholic church and the modern world. Especially the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* was a means for the Catholic church, to embrace society and turn towards the people. With it, they faced the spiritual and methodical challenge that we call 'salvation history' and tried to create pastoral awareness for the signs of the time and contribute to a youthful openness of the church itself. For the dialogue with the world, they concluded, it was necessary to recognize God's voice in the voice of the time instead of strictly holding on to the old.¹⁷⁸ To be in dialogue with current society, *Gaudium et Spes* gives an outline of a Christian anthropology with human dignity as a fundament.¹⁷⁹

This anthropology has been criticized because it would not be radical enough. It is no systematical anthropology starting from the Scripture and is merely based on philosophy and theology. This makes that by some scholars *Gaudium et Spes* is regarded too positive and does not capture the real issue of human being and sin. The major question of modern society, why we need salvation at all, remains unanswered. As Ratzinger (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI) states, it reminds us of Pelagianism, where grace is no necessity and the need for baptism in fact disappears. This is, as we have seen, one of the essential themes in Augustine's work, which is also intermingled with his marriage theology, and shows how difficult it is to come towards a balanced theology.¹⁸⁰

John Paul II, *Man and Woman – He created them*

In "Man and Woman – He created them" John Paul II continues the path that was initiated by *Gaudium et Spes*. He highlights in detail the relation between a man and a woman. In his approach he is influenced by the intensity of the God experience and the unconditional self gift of John of the Cross. As the Trinity is the example of love and gift, John Paul II states that the spousal love of man and woman is the pragmatic case of a total gift of self in our experience. To love is to give oneself.¹⁸¹ The essence of spousal love, he says, is self giving and the surrender of one's "I". The fullest and most uncompromising form of love consists precisely in self – giving, in making one's inalienable and nontransferable "I" someone else's property.¹⁸² Interestingly he combines the sexual intercourse with a deep spiritual experience and fulfilment of the person through the gift of self. The body, according to John Paul II, manifests itself through its visibility and as an intermediarity between man and woman to communicate. As such, he states that the meaning of the body in itself is community.¹⁸³ He does not mention the realistic effects of the unconditional self giving to another and what it means, when it is not accepted in love and might be abused in wrong situations. However, the interesting theological and essential theme of John Paul II's writings is the belief of fulfilment through the social bond of man. As he says: "Man resembles God not only because of the spiritual nature of his soul, but also by reason of his social nature. In the encounter with the other we can fully develop ourselves as human beings".¹⁸⁴ This makes the bond of marriage, a special bond where, as also Augustine emphasises, Christians can develop and follow the path to God together.

¹⁷⁸ Chenu, 1967: 60-72

¹⁷⁹ Schillebeeckx, 1967: 81-89; Chenu, 1967: 73,74

¹⁸⁰ Ratzinger: 316, 320, 324, 332

¹⁸¹ John Paul II, 2006: 23, 24

¹⁸² John Paul II, 2006: 32

¹⁸³ Idem:176

¹⁸⁴ Idem: 31, 58, 89

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, on love in the family.

Pope Francis tries to deal with the challenges of our time with an openness of the church that the Second Vatican council could not achieve. In the last part of this thesis we will concentrate on how marriage or the 'household' could find a place in our post-modern society, but because Pope Francis' synodal apostolic exhortation is in a line with church documents on marriage and love, it is discussed it here as well. Pope Francis' *Amoris Laetitia* is a request to clerics to have mercy with people. The evils that oppose marriage are the same through all the ages, from Augustine to Francis, but how the church deals with these evils and supports people to find the strength to deal with this, changes through time. Francis suggests to treat love in marriage based on a carefully and tenderly describing of human love. Conjugal love, he states, defines the partners in a richly encompassing and lasting union with that mixture of enjoyment and struggles, pain and relief, annoyances and pleasures.¹⁸⁵ With this, Pope Francis provides room for discussion, not only to discuss on the joy, but also the difficulties within marriage. As the apostle Paul said, "Yet those who marry will experience distress in this life".¹⁸⁶ And as such he emphasises the need for gradualness in pastoral care, based on the three verbs: guiding, discerning and integrating.¹⁸⁷ Not that there is no evil that opposes marriage. He mentions divorce, for instance, and the increasing number of divorces as very troubling.¹⁸⁸ Important to him is that we can learn from each conflict and this also accounts for marriage. He calls upon mercy also for the suffering of children in situations of conflict. And states that marriage between different religions, or homosexuals, should be respected. The church or Christians should refrain from unjust discrimination and every form of violence against 'others'.¹⁸⁹ With *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis, makes an appeal to focus on love's fruitfulness and procreation. The fruitfulness of the family is not only the mother and the father, but the wider family with uncles, cousins, relatives and friends. With the incorporation of the wider family network he re-creates the family as corner of society. Because in his view the family is the group of people who are connected to each other in different ways through family bonds. This makes a discussion of who is or is not part of the family and how this forms a wider household or community more easy.

The main message is that the spirituality of the sacrament of marriage has a deeply social character¹⁹⁰, like John Paul II emphasised. Another point mentioned in this apostolic exhortation is that marriage should be the place where parents are dedicated to the education of children. No obsession, but a lovingly helping them to grow in freedom, maturity, overall discipline and real autonomy.¹⁹¹ And regarding the more spiritual and sacramental role of marriage Pope Francis says: "the family is in spiritual sense a path which the Lord is using to lead them to the heights of mystical union. Spirituality of growing old together and the spirituality of care, consolation and incentive. *Amoris Laetitia* seeds emphatically to affirm not the "ideal family" but the very rich and complex reality of the family life."¹⁹²

The three goods of marriage from Augustine, producing offspring, being faithful and sharing the sacrament of the Lord together, are certainly present in Pope Francis' teaching, but differ a lot from the way for instance Pope Pius XI wrote about it in his *casti connubii*. The writings of Pope Pius XI are characterised by the emphasise on human sin and the frustration about the passions, errors and

¹⁸⁵ Pope Francis, 2017: chap 4

¹⁸⁶ 1 Corinthians 7:28 New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (NRSVCE); see also this thesis 'Paul – 1 cor 7:28'

¹⁸⁷ Pope Francis, 2017: chap 8

¹⁸⁸ Idem: chap 6

¹⁸⁹ Idem: chap 6

¹⁹⁰ Pope Francis, 2017: chap 6

¹⁹¹ Idem: chap 7

¹⁹² Idem: chap 9

vices of men. Pope Francis is much more positive and understanding, with respect for differences between people, concentrating on love and the family as a spiritual path.

Post – Modernity

Introduction

Before we concentrate on the lessons learned and what Augustine's theology of marriage can teach us today, it is important to understand the development from modernity to post-modernity. Characteristic for this time is that institutions, as also marriage, do not have the status they use to have. The reason for this is that in the post-modernism paradigm, the claim of truth is rejected. Authority comes to rest with the person and truth is 'what works for me'. The general notion that different sorts of people see the world differently, is now deeply embedded in our culture.¹⁹³ Therefore some say it seems as if history has ended in Post-modernity, because there is no progress or linear eschatological time any more, the age of authority and capital truth is over.¹⁹⁴ As a result of this also religion is not a discipline or obedience, but it is part of a production society: we only take what we need. The post-modern individual consumes spiritual experiences, each in his or her own way and in his or her own time.

This religion without an ultimate 'author' and the decline of the main religious traditions leaves large numbers of people free to experiment. The core belief of New Age in the divinity of the Self, for instance, is grounded in some variant of Hinduism and Buddhism and comes from a fundamental unity: "all is one" and God is not outside, but in ourselves. The result is that it is the sovereign individual that makes the choices and has the right to determine what is truth and what is false.¹⁹⁵ In post-modernism there is the freedom to be different, the privilege of the monk or the mystic, is now within every individual's reach.¹⁹⁶ The post-modern view on life however, differs from a religious way of living. Whereas the latter celebrates the human insufficiency, post-modernity appeals to the full development of the presumed infinite human potency. Post-modernism is in fact still happening within the setting of modernity and within a creation of our world where I as human subject am the one that rules. To show how the institute marriage has been affected by this, the work of Bennet will be discussed. First, we concentrate on two important post-modern thinkers, that were both influenced by Augustine to show how Augustine is still relevant in a post-modern age. Heidegger and Derrida try to go beyond the most difficult limit of the hermeneutic triangle, that is 'time' or the 'system'. But somehow the excavation of a deeper meaning seems to be postponed eternally.

Heidegger

Heidegger breaks with the absolute system of modernity or any statements about truth. He argues that there is no absolute system in which everything fits, because there is always something that has not been thought of. In a deconstruction of western metaphysics, Heidegger shows what the 'absolute system' consists of. According to Heidegger, the absolute system is a way in which 'Being' shows itself at that moment in time. He states that reality always shows itself in a certain transmission of Being. We have to take a step back to withdraw from the ruling transmission of Being. We can only tell about Being in absolute sense when we take a step back. The step back is an

¹⁹³ Heelas, 1998:24; Bruce, 1998: 28, 31, 32

¹⁹⁴ Cupit, 1998: 218

¹⁹⁵ Heelas, 1998:24,25; Bruce, 1998: 27

¹⁹⁶ Heelas, 1998:24,25; Bauman, 1998: 71

attempt to think the difference. It is a step back towards a 'telling silence', where the essence of Being itself is. The belief in an objective truth and modern technology is for Heidegger only a way in which Being shows itself in time.¹⁹⁷

In Heidegger's analysis of the *Confessiones* from Augustine, he deals with the human Self through *concupiscentia*. As he states, man is continuously trapped in a historical appearance of Being. In our existence, in our-Being-in-the-world, we are confronted with concupiscence and lose ourselves. In the frequency of the world we are withdrawn from the essence of Being itself: "Deformed is my life, I am losing myself in frequency"¹⁹⁸. The only way to find the Self is when we really lose ourselves. Paradoxically, for Heidegger, falling is the way to stand up. In the existential experience of losing everything and falling into emptiness, lies the opportunity to win the real Self. Asking yourself "Who am I?" and "What do I love?" is the only way to break through the historical 'Dasein' and come to an essential and existential experience of the Self. Thus, for Heidegger, as post-modern thinker, we are trapped in history in the appearance of Being. There is no outside, no ultimate author, no objective truth. The only way to think the difference is in the fallenness from Being, in the essence of Being itself.¹⁹⁹

Paradoxically Heidegger's falling or losing everything and falling into emptiness to break through the historical Dasein reminds us of Augustine his search for God. Concupiscence not only as lust or desire, but as everything that pulls man away from the essence, is also very Augustinian. The difference though, between both thinkers is that Augustine, in his search for God is the one in which this search fulfils itself. Augustine experiences God in himself.²⁰⁰ To Heidegger, this is too much a subjective psychological analyse wherein he criticises Augustine for losing the question of God. Paradoxically, Heidegger also states that losing oneself is an endless occupation in the search for new fulfilment. Our search for a deeper state of Being turns out to coincide with the same historical appearance of Being, wherein any view of God slips out of our hands.

Derrida

In inspiration of the *Confessiones* of Augustine, Derrida writes "Circumfessions", the caption of his biography written by Geoffrey Bennington.²⁰¹ As a post-modern thinker, Derrida's work is also characterized by a deconstruction of a so called objective knowledge. Every point of departure is deconstructed, and its foundations are cleared, as in an archaeological excavation. He uses this deconstruction to reveal all layers of language and being, in which we are captured. His thinking is sometimes compared to negative theology, in which every positive addressing to God is negated in our human inability to truly grasp Him.²⁰² Derrida shows that we are captured in our inability to speak in silence. The essence of a discussion is impossible to grasp from within our logocentric system. As soon as we speak, the essence of the words slips away. There is only the promise that lies underneath language: the origin of language itself, the trace. But as long as we are in the world,

¹⁹⁷ Heidegger, 2002: 54- 58, 72- 78, 86.

¹⁹⁸ Heidegger, 1921: 205

¹⁹⁹ Heidegger, 1921: 205-210, 214-220, 230,231, 240, 246

²⁰⁰ Geest, van, 2007: 109

²⁰¹ Derrida, 2005; Bennington & Derrida 2008; Bennington's contribution, "Derridabase", is an attempt to provide a comprehensive explication of Derrida's work. "Derridabase" appears on the upper two-thirds of the book's pages, while Derrida's contribution, "Circumfession", is written on the lower third of each page;

²⁰² Derrida, 2008: 144

language is the frontier of existence that we will never pass. Because can we mention that what doesn't shows itself?²⁰³

Therefore, Derrida introduces the 'event'. We do not know when the event will happen that will turn out to be the essence of the story. What it means more or less, is that we cannot do truth but we will be visited by the truth, as an unexpected but welcome guest. Visited by truth is only possible from within an unconditional hospitality. The truth happens to us as an event and comes from outside any possible expectation or horizon.²⁰⁴ Thus, when we thus confess our own story, as Augustine does in his *Confessiones*, this is what Derrida calls 'circumfession', wherein he combines confession with circumcision. Circumcision is something that happens to a child before he is able to speak. An event that marks a sign for his life. In our confession, we are always too late for what really happens to us. The famous Augustine quote '*sero te amavi*' is thus to Derrida 'too late have I loved you'.²⁰⁵ Where the 'too late' refers to an existentiality within the limitations of language and being, we can only let truth happen in ourselves and also in the confession to our Self. Therefore, we are not sure who is the one that is confessing. Because in waiting for the event to happen, the other is happening in us; we can only confess the other.²⁰⁶

An interesting similarity between Derrida and Augustine, is that they are both 'accused' of being a negative theologian.²⁰⁷ Derrida's negation has everything to do with language. In all our speaking (and writing) there is a logo-centristic structure that starts from certain presuppositions. All our speaking is focussed on meaning, but this meaning constantly drifts away. We can prepare our words but we can never exactly grasp what happens while we are speaking. To Derrida, there is no direct entrance towards something definitive. In the work of Augustine, there is a continuous tension between his affirmative and negative speaking about God. Because it is not within our human ability to know God, Augustine assumes that negation should be the starting point to speak about God in a plausible way. However, a difference between Derrida and Augustine, is that in the *Confessiones* Augustine describes a path towards God. It is a search for God that at the same time opens up the mystery. And in his rhetorical language, Augustine inspires and affects the reader with Him, and from or through this 'deconstruction' catches a glimpse of God. To Derrida, the search for God is a useless mission. With the term 'event', Derrida claims that the essence of truth is something that can only happen to us, break through our horizon our confinement in language, and is as such never reachable from within our horizon of expectation.

Both Heidegger and Derrida show how difficult it is in this time to 'claim' any idea of truth. In this setting, the institute marriage has become a state of life that is not meaningful in itself. The marriage community as strict as Pope Pius presented it, could be of value to some individuals as long as it works to them. To see the intrinsic values of Augustine's marriage theology we should in fact deconstruct the 'dogma' and re-invest the relevance of his theology or re-interpret his ideas to show the value of his marriage theology in this post-modern appearance of Being.

²⁰³ Derrida, 2008: 146-148, 155, 156, 162

²⁰⁴ Derrida, 2005: 20, 21

²⁰⁵ *Confessiones* X:27

²⁰⁶ Derrida, 2005: 22, 23, 25

²⁰⁷ Derrida, 2008: 144, Geest, 2007: 45, 208, 210

Water is thicker than blood, households and families

We have seen how the church struggles with the role of marriage in the transition to the modern and post-modern period. With the second Vatican Council a more pastoral voice was developed, continued by both Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis. In *Amoris Laetitia* Pope Francis emphasises the importance of the wider family network including uncles, cousins, relatives and friends. This is the group that is connected through the family bond. In “Water is thicker than blood, An Augustinian theology of marriage and singleness” Jana Marguerite Bennet gives an outline of the use of Augustines marriage theology in (post)modern times. In this, she shifts the focus from family towards households. As the title of the book already reveals, she states that the bond of baptism in Christianity is stronger than the bond of blood. The eschatological question of marriage should, in her point of view, not be what makes a good marriage, but what we have hope in? And why?²⁰⁸ The aim of this thesis does not only adress Augustine’s marriage theology, but also considers what we can learn from this communion in a (post)modern society? Bennet addresses this question, therefore her book is discussed below.

From marriage to households

Bennet states that the discussion on Christian marriage merely deals with three questions. Firstly, the gender issue, secondly the relation between the church and the state of the family and thirdly the discussion about the variations on families: divorce, adoption, foster children, gay marriage, etc. The Christian view on marriage and gender is, for instance, often that God ordained the different gender roles. On the other hand, there has been said that equality of gender roles is essentially Christian. The feminist view is, on the contrary, that the gender roles are artificial. The idea of complementarity in marriage, Bennet states, is helpful, as it recognizes the interchange in relationship to God, but unhelpful to the extent that it tries to narrowly construe precisely how those relationships proceed along the lines of traditional male/female roles.²⁰⁹

That not only the history of marriage and family is complex, but also the changing view from modernity towards post-modernity is quoted with Julie Hanlon Rubio who states that post-modernists “want to affirm people’s right to live and love in the family of their choosing” while modernists “want to preserve the ideal of ‘the family’ and they claim, the culture itself”.²¹⁰ This changing approach also counts for the concept of singleness. The separation between marriage and singleness has been present in Christian theology since its very early days. However, to Christians in the past this was present in the form of ‘virginity’, ‘celibacy’, ‘monasticism’ or ‘holy widow’. In our contemporary culture, singleness appears as a ‘free’ state. We live in a culture that is prone to confusing and mixing celibacy and singleness. Bennet says that the juxtaposition of singleness and marriage appears to exist most in clergy. To the Catholic church, the celibate is the ‘only’ accepted state of singleness. Bennet wants to deal with singleness, more as a sociological term and suggests to broaden the concept of marriage towards households. Marriage, as she suggests, should not only focus on the relationship with eachother, but also on the wider community. She concentrates on the question how the household can be part of this world and as something radically new? It is the cultivation of virtues and living a good Christian life, no matter what state we are in, that should be of main focus. Bennet compares this with liturgy that both has an eternal and a temporal

²⁰⁸ Bennet, 2008: 8

²⁰⁹ Idem: 19,21, 82

²¹⁰ Rubio, 2003, in Bennet, 2008: 187

character.²¹¹

The household of God

According to Bennet, some Protestant theologians have treated marriage and family to the point of over idealizing it. She states that this focus on marriage is misplaced and problematic. Some Roman Catholics have done the same, for instance in *Lumen Gentium* (*Vaticanum II*) the family has been referred to as the 'domestic church'. This term, Bennet says, served to overemphasize marriage as a contract used in various ways. Instead she suggests to use the term as the fathers do, 'small church', that she, on her account, links with her theology of household.²¹² The failure to recognize this new status of households, is to her the cause that leads to the overfascination of marriage. Because salvation history shows theologically that marriage and singleness belong to each other and cannot be separated.²¹³

Theologians tend to speak of marriage largely in terms of creation only. To Bennet, they miss some of the richness the church fathers attach to marriage. Referring to *Familiaris Consortio* of John Paul II, she states that it "wonderfully enriches our understanding of marriage and family". However, he is one of the former, seeing marriage as a natural reality that can have fulfilment on earth, but does not have eschatological capacity. Virginity to him is the only definitive value. Marriage as such, has no participation in the fulfilment promised eschatologically. This contradicts with Bennet's vision on the 'Household of God'. Interestingly, John Paul II does suggest that the apostle Paul sees both marriage and virginity as gifts from God that enables us to live in God's kingdom. The aim of Bennet's book has been to suggest a theological vision in which Christians understand themselves first as members of the body of Christ and therefore as having a unified history that participates in God's grace. In this, she also refers to Augustine's theology in which certain states of singleness might lead to a more powerful union between the soul and God, and in which both marriage and virginity point towards an eschatological future.²¹⁴

Spiritual virgin

Bennet suggests that studying theologians, as Augustine of Hippo, who were not dealing with modernity's assumptions, gives us a refreshing perspective. Especially based on "The city of God", but also on other writings as "The good of marriage", "Holy virginity" and "The excellence of widowhood", she gives an outline of the use of Augustine's marriage theology in (post)modern times. Her argument is based on the observation that Augustine did not separate marriage and singleness from the salvation theory. In both he gives an account of salvation history. According to Bennet, contemporary theologians focus on Augustine's view on sex and sexual pleasure in relation to creation and often do not take note on his views of salvation history as a whole. The virtuous life is also a participation in salvation history, and as such it is not limited to a state of life.²¹⁵ Referring to Augustine's "Literal interpretation of Genesis", and the creation of marriage before the fall, she emphasises that the main issue to him is not about sexual desire linked with evil, but the development of a sacramental theology. To Augustine there was first the creation of man and woman in paradise and "the sum of their good activity is to turn to Him by whom they were

²¹¹ Bennet, 2008: 23-26, 84, 106

²¹² Idem: 4, 10

²¹³ Idem: 5, 14, 115, 120, 132

²¹⁴ Idem: 129-132, 189

²¹⁵ Idem: 34-43

made”.²¹⁶ Then there is the fall, wherein the humans turned their desire from God and put it on themselves. It is a fall from grace, as Augustine says: “Our minds potentially see what is good, but they are unable to do good, because our bodies turn towards themselves and do what they will”.²¹⁷ The issue to Augustine, according to Bennet, is not sex, but disobedience. This fallen nature is in desperate need of the restoration of its original grace and the cleaning from sin through baptism and through the sacraments. To Augustine what is restored here, is the relationship with God. Marriage has a direct connection to this sacramental unity. As such, marriage and virginity are bound up in a life of grace and have an equal part in the history and economy of salvation.²¹⁸

Bennet also refers to Augustine’s statement about the Old Testament where even polygamy was acceptable and encouraged, because of obedience to God and human kind. The key point therefore is not the specific state of life, but whether God had graciously given wisdom and insight to a person. As such, the primary means of holy living is by means of virtue and the right relationship with God. According to Augustine, there is a spiritual and a physical marriage and a spiritual and a physical virginity. You could be a physically married, while being a spiritual virgin. With this, Bennet suggests that Augustine tries to focus on the Christian life towards *eudaimonia*, or happiness in God, that especially includes his conception of how households lead us toward that end.²¹⁹

The community

The title of Bennet’s book refers to the relationship among Christians that are more important than blood ties. Christians, she states, are members of the body of Christ, unified by baptism and as such all members of the household of God (1 Tim 3). With this in mind, she argues that God’s action in the world makes dichotomies as marriage versus singleness superfluous. Eschatologically the main question should not be: what makes a good marriage? But what have we hope in? and why? She also refers to Alasdair MacIntyre’s book “After Virtue”, in which he introduces the term *telos* as the aim toward which humans tend.²²⁰ He says that humans lost their sense of *telos* in the Enlightenment and with it, lost a sense of what it means to be orienting one’s life and developing virtues in progress to that end. In this sense, marriage is instituted because humanity is intrinsically social and directed toward the good of friendship, in this friendship or in the ‘community’ the directedness towards God, or the *telos* can be fully developed. The ‘community’ of marriage is in this respect a figure of the restored relationship of all humanity. Our created bodies, male and female, were created to be in communion.²²¹

²¹⁶ *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*: VI, IX

²¹⁷ *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*: VIII 12, 25

²¹⁸ Bennet, 2008: 48, 49, 69, 77

²¹⁹ *Idem*: 95-98, 105, 157

²²⁰ MacIntyre, 1981

²²¹ Bennet, 2008: 8, 16, 27- 31, 62-81, 160, 187

The community a 'tripartite good'

In this chapter we will investigate the values that Augustine defines in his marriage theology. They can help us to develop an image of the way human relations work and how we can develop a community of love in various contexts. With Bennet's interpretation of Augustine, we have seen how his marriage theology also accounts for households. In this she has broadened the concept of this little community. And refers to the bond of baptism wherein all Christians are members of the body of Christ. In this chapter, marriage is explored as a community of people bound with each other through love. Where Bennet refers to the Christian family and shows that a household can even be sacramental or direct humanity towards a goal, we leave the Christian clause. Because the questions: What have we hope in? and why? Are relevant to anyone. The idea of the directedness towards a *telos* could make any community go forward. Bennet also shows how the concupiscence in Augustine's theology is not only about sex. It is merely his struggle with the uncontrolled desires of human kind. This could be bodily desire or lust, about which Augustine is quite direct and sharp on the side of men, but it could also refer to any other egocentric desire for material things, for power and fortune, or even laziness. These evils are, according to Augustine, connected with original sin and as such part of our being human. In the relation with the other, we can try to deal with this concupiscence and overcome the egocentric focus. Love can help in dealing with uncontrolled desires. John Paul II states that the body is not only the place of sin, the body makes it in the first place possible to communicate. The communication of love happens via bodily communication. The divine communication is a communication of overflowing love that connotes "total self-giving", as such the body is capable of making visible what is invisible. In the encounter with the other, man is able to fully develop itself.

Friendship

To Augustine, the bond between a man and a woman is a special one. It is the first natural bond between a man and a woman.

"Prima itaque naturalis humanae societatis copula vir et uxor est." (Aug. *boni coni* 1.1)

Not only Bennet, but also Willemien Otten and Johann Peters state that this bond underlies the marriage bond, and to Augustine, friendship is one of the goods of marriage. The bond of friendship, Otten states, overrides the importance of procreation. In this she refers to Adam and Eve in paradise, who possessed a natural capacity for the good of friendship. Their union was intensified because of their offspring. As such, not only marriage but even sexual intercourse takes place for the sake of friendship.²²²

Although there are also some more critical voices in the discussion on Augustine and the relationship between a husband and a wife. Kim Power states that to Augustine the equal companionship was an impossibility.²²³ She states that according to Augustine a woman was a slave to man. Also Dagmar Kiesel has a quite negative interpretation of Augustine and the relationship between a man and a woman. She argues that, to Augustine, the goal of sexual intercourse is only for creating offspring and as such can never provide any sexual satisfaction to a woman.²²⁴ Although she also

²²² Peters, 1918: 3; Otten, 1998: 398; *De bono coniugali*: 9.9.

²²³ Power, 1996: 126

²²⁴ Kiesel, 2008: 290

acknowledges that friendship is the foundation of the marriage union.²²⁵ Anthony Dupont states that Augustine does not only use concupiscence in a negative way and Carol Harrison even highlights the evolution of Augustine's idea on friendship that she recognizes.²²⁶ If we study Augustine's personal life, we see that he values friendship a lot, in fact he never seems to be alone, but always in the company of family, friends, or a community.²²⁷ The classic ideal of friendship, which Cicero describes as 'an agreement on all things human and divine with goodwill and love', is where Augustine is familiar with. Augustine adds to this is that the source of such friendship lies in God's grace, and that unity in the body of Christ provides the solid base for friendship.²²⁸ In September of the year 386, Augustine retreated to live with some friends in Cassiciacum, a small place in the countryside near Rome. In only a few months he abandoned his marriage, his public position and his hope on financial security and social prestige to live this classical ideal of friendship.²²⁹ Later on, in his *Confessiones*, Augustine writes about his concubine, who he had to send away for the marriage that was arranged for him. This break up left 'a trail of blood' and he was left behind wounded. His heart was deeply attached to her, and she was the only one for him. In fact, he had been faithful to her all these years.²³⁰ In *de bono coniugali* he wonders if the relationship with his concubine could have been called a marriage and concludes that if man and woman share their bed without the wish to have children, this certainly is a marriage if they promise each other faithfulness until death separates them.²³¹

Marriage without sex?

If friendship, the first natural bond between a man and a woman, is the foundation of marriage, what does the sexual relation in marriage mean? Augustine's marriage theology is often seen as a pessimistic ethical-antropological model wherein marriage was only meant to create offspring.²³² However, in Augustine's discussion with Pelagius, we see that Pelagius states that Joseph and Mary were not really married, because they did not have sexual intercourse. Augustine in the contrary, emphasises that marriage is not only the union of two bodies.²³³

*"Non itaque propterea non fuit pater Joseph, quia cum matre Domini non concubuit, quasi usorem libido faciat et non caritas coniugalis"*²³⁴

The relation between Mary and Joseph is to Augustine a marvellous example of conjugal chastity between spouse and spouse.²³⁵ If a man and a wife, with both their accordance are living in abstinence together, we should not separate them. They share conjugal love and are married.²³⁶ In his episcopal sermons, Augustine also encouraged the possibility of friendship between married couples, but preferred to see it as originating from shared parenting or from the practice of abstinence, which should be increasingly evident as the marriage becomes holier, rather than from

²²⁵ Kiesel, 2008: 363

²²⁶ Dupont, 2008: 585; Harrison, 1997: 94-97

²²⁷ Harrison, C., 2000: 162

²²⁸ Idem

²²⁹ Brown, 2000: 109

²³⁰ Power, 1996: 98; *Confessiones*: 6,13,23/ 6,15,25

²³¹ *De bono coniugali*: 5,5

²³² Peters, 1918: 14,15; Kiesel, 2008: 281

²³³ *Contra Iulianum libri sex*: 5,46/5,62; see also this thesis 'Nuptiae in the anti Pelagian writings'

²³⁴ *Sermons*: 51

²³⁵ Regan, 1983: 358

²³⁶ Peters, 1918: 4, 8

sexual union.²³⁷ As such to Augustine, the essence of marriage was not sexual consummation, except for the procreation of children.²³⁸

Augustine started his life in abstinence in Cassiciacum in a community influenced by the tradition of the neo-platonists. Harrison even suggests that we see here the first attempts of Augustine to live a christian life in community.²³⁹ In the *Confessiones*, he tells us about his conversation with Ponticianus who told him the story of Antony, the most well-known and influential Eastern ascetic. Augustine and Alypius, his friend, started to read "The life of Antony" and they were converted on the spot, deciding to 'serve God'.

Augustine's early marriage theology is very much influenced by neo-platonist thinking. The ideas of Philo and Origenes are clear about one thing: God has no body, and as such, human beings did not have a body in Paradise either.²⁴⁰ Adam and Eve were humans, but in the 'body' of an angel. This was a starting point to them to presume that marriage was created only after the Fall.²⁴¹ Proceeding with this 'Platonic' line of thinking, in Augustine's early work he states that God's command: "And you, be fruitful and multiply, abound on the earth and multiply in it"²⁴² was ment in a spiritual way, to bring forth spiritual 'fruits'.²⁴³ The term *nuptiae* then was used by him in the context of a spiritual marriage, the marriage with the Lord.²⁴⁴ As such we see that the basic attitude of the intellectual elite of late antiquity influenced Augustine's ideal of friendship and community.²⁴⁵

Household

Kiesel suggests that Augustine was not only influenced, but also 'marked' by this spiritual intellectuality and that his attempt to define marriage as a 'good' was embedded in a deeply negative view on partnership, sexuality and family.²⁴⁶ Her interpretation creates an extreme ambivalent image of Augustine's marriage theology that could be questioned.²⁴⁷ Geerlings emphasises, referring to the history of sexuality of Foucault, that the negative burden of sexual morality developed from antiquity, but that it was strengthened and grounded in the fourth century.²⁴⁸ This emphasis and negative burden of sexual morality in the fourth century happened in Christian but also in Pagan context. To many people in these times, the chastity vow ment freedom and emancipation from family traditions.²⁴⁹ Especially in his early work Augustine is tributary to the spirit of his time and the neo-platonist tradition. But in the chronological development of his marriage theology we see that he will break with this 'negative' anthropological morality. As discussed in this thesis, Augustine chooses in his interpretation of Paul the positive side instead of the negative.²⁵⁰

²³⁷ Power, 1996: 105

²³⁸ Idem

²³⁹ Harrison, 2000: 178-180

²⁴⁰ Geerlings, 2010:379-381

²⁴¹ Idem: 383-385

²⁴² Genesis 9:7

²⁴³ *De Genesi contra Manichaeos libri duo*: 1,19 Senza dubbio ci è lecito intenderla anche in senso spirituale in modo da ritenere che dopo il peccato fu, molto verosimilmente, trasformata in fecondità carnale.

²⁴⁴ see also this thesis 'Nuptiae in Augustine's early work 388-401'

²⁴⁵ Kiesel, 2008: 280

²⁴⁶ Kiesel, 2008: 360

²⁴⁷ Dupont, 2008: 585-589

²⁴⁸ Geerlings, 2010: 375-377

²⁴⁹ Idem

²⁵⁰ see also this thesis 'Analysing the way Augustine uses sources'

Marriage is good because the deeper relation, the bond of friendship and love; the sexual aspect is secondary.²⁵¹

Augustine's problem is not sex as such, nor pleasure. His issue is about desire and pleasure that is not controlled by the will, where sin has its origin.²⁵² The main concern of Augustine is that Adam and Eve did not obey God. Therefore, the initial relation of trust and oneness has been broken. The struggle Augustine has to deal with from his critics is not so much to pinpoint that sex is wrong. Especially in the development of his marriage theology through his life, we see that concupiscence has a much wider range of reference in his thought than the purely sexual. Harrison and Otten both also argue that Augustine's main concern is with the social aspect of life. Sin is not so much about the 'right order' but more about 'social categories'.²⁵³ We could say that sin refers to the brokenness of a relationship. It is a failure of love, fellowship and friendship, which lies at the heart of human society and which is defined in relation to God.²⁵⁴

This basis of Augustine's marriage theology could help us in society today. Is it not exactly this human relationship that is missing in (post-)modern society? Where the focus of modernity lies on a belief in rationality and progress of technology and post-modernity is a total culmination of individualism. Both trust in a full development of the presumed infinite human potency. The economic system of the last decades had a focus on the rational human being. But the '*homo economic*' is, partly due to the economic crises, on its return.²⁵⁵ More and more it is acknowledged that this rational anthropology is not sufficient to explain the complexity of human kind. The '*homo economic*' is based on a radical negative image of mankind.²⁵⁶ The challenge for those who want to introduce a richer image of man in economics is to show that economy is more than acting only for your own good.²⁵⁷ Psychology teaches us that people do not prefer the rational and pure individualistic approach and are driven more by their emotions than was thought before: they want to be happy, but do not know how.²⁵⁸

Augustine has also been struggling with the 'anthropological' image of man, that by some scholars is still being explained in a negative way. But his interpretation of Genesis does provide a way to deal with the negative side of 'sin' of humanity. As such, the central theme of Genesis, the ultimate reciprocity of man and woman, finds a place in the history of a broken relationship. In the history of sin, the reciprocity of a man and a woman is the environment wherein man can find his fullness and his happiness, but it is at the same time exactly the environment where sin happens that breaks the plan of love.²⁵⁹

It is the always present tension in the relation between man and woman, but also in a family or a wider community, that should be acknowledged. The development towards an anthropology of the relational human being, will give room for happiness, hope and love.²⁶⁰ Because, if they are being led in the right direction, human sins can take the place of virtues as charity. More than ever before we

²⁵¹ Harrison, 2000: 192

²⁵² Power, 1996: 106

²⁵³ Harrison, 2000: 189, 190

²⁵⁴ Idem

²⁵⁵ Balkenende, 2016; Rupert, 2016

²⁵⁶ Bruni, 2015: 108

²⁵⁷ Hengstmengel, 2016:31

²⁵⁸ Damme, 2016: 57

²⁵⁹ Bruni, 2015: 76

²⁶⁰ Balkenende, 2016

are individuals.²⁶¹ Loneliness and individuality are characteristics of our modern western world. Our relations are not as sustainable and permanent as two generations ago. But in essence we do develop ourselves in the image of our loved ones and in the bond with others.²⁶² The desire to bring out the best in the other, is not limited to loved ones, friends or parent-child relations.²⁶³ Constructive relations between staff members and their supervisors, based on trust and shared hope, do strengthen whole organisations.

The foundation that Augustine created with his marriage theology for a loving interaction with each other is in this respect interesting and inspiring. In contrast to the more negatively understood Augustine, that focusses on sexuality and physicality, we have seen an Augustine that emphasises on the social relation as the heart of love and friendship. Bennet uses Augustine's theology as an outline of marriage versus singleness and the idea of the household of God. In her argumentation she refers mainly to the relational origin of man. The for Augustine, characteristic tripartite good of marriage is not referred to by her. While this basis fundament of marriage gives a threefold characteristic belonging, in Augustine's view unseparable to the community of love. This threepartite relation between man and wife can show us how the self giving capacity of a man and a woman enables them to be more than only body, but relational beings. It is a relation of love that enables human beings to develop a deeply fulfilled consciousness through each other.

Bonum Proles

Proles is the genitive singular of *proles*, which means as much as descendant, offspring or procreation. The good of children.

While some scholars say Augustine failed to give a satisfactory place of sex in marriage, because he lacks the more personalized account of the sexualized person, we have seen above that the influence of Antiquity should not be underestimated.²⁶⁴ Before Christianity, sex was already seen as dangerous and harmful to people's health. To argue the positive character of marriage and sexual intercourse, Augustine states that even Adam and Eve did have sex in paradise. They were already honorably married in paradise and their children were born out of a bodily union. However, without any feelings of lust.²⁶⁵

The first natural goal of marriage is to create offspring, but parents also have the duty to take care of them and raise them with love.²⁶⁶ This is not only to raise these children as good Christians, but also because education and caring for children raises the parents.²⁶⁷ Augustine gives all the credits of his son to God, as he names him Adeodatus, 'gift from God'. Without the creative power of the Lord, there was no offspring at all.²⁶⁸

John Paul II emphasises that if you take a closer look at the Genesis text, we read that Adam united himself with Eve his wife, who conceived and gave birth to Cain and said: "I have acquired a man from the Lord"²⁶⁹. In the original text the word united is "knew": The relation between Adam and

²⁶¹ Buijs, 2016: 36

²⁶² Wachter, 2011

²⁶³ Ossewaarde – Lowtoo, 2016:57

²⁶⁴ Harrison, 2000: 175-177; see also this thesis 'Marriage in early Christianity' and 'The community a 'tripartite good''

²⁶⁵ Geerlings, 2010: 373, 374, 386, 387; *De genesi ad litteram libri duodecimo* 9,3,6; see also this thesis 'Nuptiae in Augustine's early work'

²⁶⁶ Peters, 1918: 14,15; *De bono conjugali*: 13.15; 17.19; 29.32; see also this thesis 'De bono conjugali'

²⁶⁷ Geest, 2012;

²⁶⁸ Power, 1996: 98; Kiesel, 2008: 289

²⁶⁹ Gen. 4: 1-2; John Paul II, 2006: 205

Eve is based on “knowledge” in which man and woman participated through their body and sex.²⁷⁰ Knowledge refers to selfconsciousness of Adam and Eve in their bodiliness and as persons.²⁷¹ John Paul also explains how the quote “Who ever looks at a woman to desire her has already committed adultery with her in his heart”²⁷², refers to the inner man. Ofcourse adultery is a sin, but the denial of the “purity of the heart” is what Christ’s words really adress.²⁷³ Concupiscence is a consequence of sin, a result from breaking the relationship with God. It is the mystery of man who turns his back on “the Father” and with it loses the original certainty. This breaking with an original unity and the desire to make it whole again leaves human beings with a tension between the flesh and the spirit. This tension can be overcome in the purity of one’s heart. It is a wake-up call, for all those individuals that do not act from their heart but from secondary motives. Not only in marriages and relationships, but also in economics and in organizations today. It has been said that the most important thing for a well functioning organisation is that people are intrinsically motivated. If people do not love their work, there is no motivation and a lot of absenteeism. The ‘new’ leadership is not top down but bottom up; to address the intrinsic motivation of the staff members is an important tool to create a positive drive. If people do not act from their heart, in fact they commit adultery to their own life.

If we take the literal meaning of *bonum prolis* as a tool, to use in the context of a wider household, or community, it could be an image of joy and love that spouses share to create a new life together? Not in the first place in the bodily and sexual meaning of the word, but in a broader context of creative energy a community of love where offspring finds a safe home and will be raised. The most important drive to a lot of people in business is to work in a team and to create something new together. It could be something practical as designing a new house, but also more theoretical, as doing research together. Any form of community where people are related to each other in whatever way, they have the opportunity to be creative together, to work together, to leave something behind for others, for the earth. If we manage to create a society of communities of love whether it is in marriage or in organisational context, people will be intrinsically motivated and happy. Cartesianism reduces man to a system of nature and undercuts the relational character of human beings, but as John Paul II states, man can only find himself through a sincere gift of self.²⁷⁴ Although Augustine did not use this broader meaning himself, as we have seen, his own life is characterized by living in community with the people he loved.

Bonum Fidei

Fidei is the genitive singular of *fides*, ‘fidelity’, ‘faith’ or ‘trust’.

It means that spouses have to exclude relations with a third person.²⁷⁵ This is quite new in the time of Augustine, because in the Roman law a man is allowed to have a concubine, but if his wife commits adultery he may kill her. For Augustine men and women should have the same rule emphasising faithfulness to each other. And if adultery does happen, a Christian is not allowed to kill at all. Moreover, he should strive for forgiveness. If a man cheats on his wife, then she is allowed to leave him and vice versa. A second marriage for both is not allowed, because in that way a partner

²⁷⁰ John Paul II, 2006: 207

²⁷¹ John Paul II, 2006: 212

²⁷² Mt 5: 27-28

²⁷³ John Paul II, 2006: 225, 229, 300, 322

²⁷⁴ John Paul II, 2006: 207

²⁷⁵ Regan, 1983: 358; Peters, 1918: 25

could use fornication as a reason to split up.²⁷⁶ Faith for Augustine is thus not only about being faithful. It starts with an equal relationship and respect for each other.

Kiesel emphasises that *fides* for Augustine is also about the duty we have to each other. Man and wife should not withhold each other from sexual intercourse. Spouses have the right to each other's body.²⁷⁷ Here again, Augustine defines the same treatment for men and for women. Through mutual faith, partners can free a purifying power of love (*caritas*) in each other. As such, the sexual relation should be seen as part of the 'friendship'.²⁷⁸ Faith or trust in a relation between two people is also based on accountability. Can you be there for the other? Can you count on each other? To trust the other means, he or she should be trustworthy. The right on each other's body is a bodily expression of the promise of the equal bond. To trust the other to be there for you also if things get difficult. Mutual faith becomes important when marriage is in bad weather.

Everybody knows that love is a mixed cup of bitterness and pleasure, fraught with snares and moments of pain.²⁷⁹ As the apostle said: *those who marry will experience distress in this life*.²⁸⁰ Augustine does not ignore the difficult part of marriage and does his uttermost best to explain how important it is not to let go. In fact, he is honest about the human incapacities at this point. Especially the uncontrolled desires are signs of evil and sin, but in marriage they will be forgiven. Marriage creates a soft place to land, where the brokenness of the original unity is restored in the presence of the other. But in order not to fall from unity again, it is Christ that gives the opportunity of redemption. This is the spiritual marriage that Augustine refers to, to wear the right wedding garment is to acknowledge that only love from a pure heart can refrain man or woman from uncontrolled desires or fornication. To trust therefore, also has to do with letting go of egoistic motives and turn towards a shared motive or purpose. In the theology of Augustine, the relationship with the other is one of trust, which means a life long bond in marriage.

In society today, many marriages fail. Not only marriages, but in all kinds of relationships people tend to leave when it gets difficult. If people are willing to trust, to go beyond the 'first' image of the other and to really meet each other not only in the good, but also in the bad times, then the community or the reciprocal bond can form the safe haven where people can and will help each other grow. The economic crisis has shown us that trust is needed when things go down. One of the main things for trust is to be open to each other. Therefore, trust also means to be considerate of each other and open for each other's actions. This will also create a risk for the own horizon or motives, in a way it makes one vulnerable. But that is exactly where trust comes in and controlling the other should stop. If you really trust someone, you can have an equal relationship where vulnerability is allowed and even criticism can be discussed. In whatever kind of community, trust is the basis of the human relation. In a well functioning community, there is a direct relation between trust on the one hand and love and happiness of the people on the other. Trust is also related to hope, to have hope is to trust in the future. Trust means that we are connected to a purpose, to others and to a positive expectation of the future.²⁸¹

²⁷⁶ *De adulterinis coniugiis*:2,15; see also this thesis 'Nuptiae in De coniugiis adulterinis'

²⁷⁷ Kiesel 2008:286; see also this thesis 'De bono coniugali'

²⁷⁸ Harrison 2000:174,175

²⁷⁹ Power, 1996: 98

²⁸⁰ see also this thesis 'Paul 1 Cor 28'

²⁸¹ Nooteboom, 2017: 9,27,28,31; Burger, 2016: 85, 86

Bonum Sacramenti

Sacramenti is the genitive singular of *Sacramentum* and derives from the term *sacer* ("sacred, holy"). This in turn is derived from the Greek New Testament word "mysterion", that means as much as mystery, guarantee or promise. The definition of sacrament in the church was in fact formulated by Augustine as an outward sign of an inward grace that has been instituted by Jesus Christ. On the basis of his theology Peters and Kiesel both conclude that indissolubility is the main characteristic of the sacrament.²⁸² In the tradition of the Roman Catholic church there are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation (Chrismation), Eucharist (Communion), Penance (Confession), Matrimony (Marriage), Holy Orders (ordination to the diaconate, priesthood, or episcopate) and Anointing of the Sick. None of these sacraments are reversible. The outward sign of inward grace can be instituted but cannot be removed. Once baptized, it is for ever. The sacraments are working, because it is Christ himself who is at work in it. It is He who baptizes.²⁸³ Peters wonders if Augustine uses the word sacrament for the nuptial relation technically in the right way, in so far as it is a sign of the grace that sanctifies the recipient.²⁸⁴ To Augustine, the marriage bond is an image of the bond man has with Christ. And in the third good, the *sacramentum*, the first two, *fides* and *proles*, have their ultimate consummation and perfection.²⁸⁵ Children are the living continuity of the marriage bond. But, according to Augustine, the attachment of the bond of marriage would never have had such power if there would not have been a mystery or sacrament involved in this communion.²⁸⁶ Chastity makes the bond between two lovers stronger and shows even more that the sacrament of marriage is an image of the heavenly marriage between Christ and his church. The bond of husband and wife rises in faithfulness and love above the earthly things and touches the love of God.²⁸⁷ The sacrament of marriage is equal: man and woman are equal, and love brings them together: "Spouses, love your wife as Christ loves his church".²⁸⁸

In his early work Augustine refers to the term *nuptiae* especially in a spiritual way. *Nuptiae* in this sense refers to the sacred marriage between the Savior and those who will be saved: "Christ is the bridegroom and the church is His bride".²⁸⁹ In his major work on marriage *De Bono Coniugali* Augustine effectuates the spiritual goal within marriage as a community of man and wife. The bond between man and woman is the first natural bond of the human community. In marriage they go their way together side by side focused on the same goal.²⁹⁰

According to Kiesel Augustine was the first churchfather who created the *bonum triplex* as an eschatological teleology.²⁹¹ Teleology, or finality, is a reason or explanation for something in function

²⁸² Peters, 1918: 28, Kiesel 2008: 317

²⁸³ *Catechismus* van de Katholieke kerk, 2008

²⁸⁴ Peters, 1918: 29

²⁸⁵ Regan, 1983:358

²⁸⁶ see also this thesis 'De bono coniugali'

²⁸⁷ see also this thesis 'Nuptiae and nuptiarum'

²⁸⁸ De nuptiis et concupiscentia: 1,11; De nuptiis et concupiscentia:1,20; De adulterinis coniugiis:1; see also this thesis 'Man and woman'

²⁸⁹ Enarrationes in Psalmos 44,1/44,3: Cantatur enim de sanctis nuptiis, de sponso et sponsa, de rege et plebe, de Salvatore et de his qui salvandi sunt.....Huius nos filii sumus, quia filii sponsi sumus ...qui fiunt nuptiae qui invitantur ad nuptias; et ipsi invitati sponsa est. Etenim sponsa Ecclesia est, sponsus Christus; see also this thesis 'Nuptiae in Augustine's early work 388-401';

²⁹⁰ *De bono conjugali* 1: Lateribus enim sibi iunguntur, qui pariter ambulant et pariter quo ambulant intuentur; see also this thesis 'de bono coniugali'

²⁹¹ Kiesel: 2008: 360, 365

of its end, purpose or goal.²⁹² It is derived from two Greek words: *telos* (end, goal, purpose) and *logos* (reason, explanation). The reason or explanation that is directed towards a goal, gives hope and inspiration to people's life. It could add a layer of meaningfulness to the more bodily or technological anthropology of modern time.

Also, Pope Francis emphasises, as Augustine, the more spiritual and sacramental role of marriage as a path that the Lord uses to lead spouses to the heights of mystical union.²⁹³ Marriage has never been seen as the ultimate lifestyle, regarding the union with God. Augustine himself was quite clear on this, marriage is good, but virginity is better. If you are not able to live in abstinence, it is good to marry.²⁹⁴ Marriage is a remedium for concupiscence and offers spouses an opportunity to grow in forgiveness and restore the broken relation of love, fellowship and friendship. With this theology of marriage and the tripartite good, *prolis*, *fidei* and *sacramenti*, Augustine provides an anthropological image of man as relational being. Marriage is a community in which people live and love and go their way together side by side. The good 'households' are sacramental and direct all of humanity towards its ultimate end in God.²⁹⁵ In modern society where we 'lost' this ending in God, it could certainly be helpful to achieve awareness of the fact that every community benefits from a higher goal. Although the Augustinian directedness towards God, is not common anymore and will be set aside as 'only ment for Christians', the very fact that any community will flourish in having a common purpose is more and more acknowledged. Not only the 'Why' question of Simon Sinek²⁹⁶, is one that alignes organisations with the question "Who are we?", "Where do we stand for?" and "What is our purpose?" also new insights in management and economy call upon the relational awareness. To create a sustainable and human economy we need behavior that is inspired by another dimension than only the strict rational.²⁹⁷ The intrinsic value of the relation the power of a community and the encounter with the other, is what we can learn from Saint Augustine, who has given us the *tripartite bonum*, to create, to trust and to strive towards a higher goal together.

²⁹² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teleology>

²⁹³ Pope Francis, 2017: chap 9; see also this thesis: 'Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, on love in the family'

²⁹⁴ see also this thesis 'De sancta uirginitate liber unus'

²⁹⁵ Bennet, 2008: 23- 26, 84, 106; see also this thesis 'Different forms of households, from marriage to household'

²⁹⁶ <https://startwithwhy.com/>

²⁹⁷ Bruni, 2015: 158

Conclusion

By studying Augustine's primary texts on '*nuptiae*', we tried to come closer to the Churchfather and distinguish the development in marriage theology. Unfortunately, it was not possible to read his entire oeuvre for this thesis. Therefore, it is possible that there are other relevant writings, we did not comprehend, that highlight other aspects. However, by reading and analysing all the passages that mention the term '*nuptiae*' and Augustine's major works on marriage, we did get an idea of the development of his marriage theology and the power of the tripartite '*bonum*'.

In his early works, Augustine mainly referred to the spiritual marriage between God and man and used this as an image for the one and only Christian faith. Marriage as such was a positive image to convince people to love God and to join the wedding party. We see that this positive image of marriage forms a central line throughout Augustine's marriage theology. Although Augustine is tributary to the classic ideal of friendship, he breaks with the negative sexual morality: "the good of marriage is to have children". We see how Augustine's marriage theology develops in the discussion with his critics. Interestingly, the fundamentals for the development of marriage as the 'corner of society' in later times, started in the context of discussion with other early Christian writers. In fact, the debates with his critics challenged Augustine to create a Christian theology for everyone. For example, where he defends the bodily aspect of marriage in the debate with the Manicheans, he has to re-invent his theology in discussion with the Donatists, who state that Mary and Joseph were not married because they did not have sexual intercourse.

Above all, Augustine defends the spiritual bond of marriage. The first natural bond between a man and a wife is not only sexual, otherwise "we would be like dogs!". The challenge for him is to balance between the bodily and spiritual image of man, and at the same time keep the need for salvation. The debate with the Pelagians provides him with the arguments to emphasise how original sin is essential to the image of man and to his marriage theology. To Augustine, lust is a result of the disobedience to God. When the scholars in high Scholasticism decide that lust already existed in paradise, it became the starting point for a negative sexual morality that developed in the Catholic church until the twentieth century. John Paul II, however, shows how lust in Augustine's theology is the same as turning away from the original unity and directly linked with breaking the relation of love. Augustine's tripartite good of marriage, *bonum prolis*, *bonum fidei*, *bonum sacramenti*, could be seen as a means to live in a community of love and to re-unite with this original unity. The first natural bond of man and woman is an equal relation, a friendship where children can be raised in safety and in love. It is a relation of trust, where spouses are accountable to each other and provide each other with a basis of openness and safety, wherein you can count on the other.

Where Pope Francis opens up towards the wider family of uncles and aunts etcetera, Bennet shows how we should speak about households instead of marriages in the diverse society of today. To re-install marriage as a state of life for everyone in these modern times, not be realistic in the first place. If we see how Augustine's theology was formed in the context of his time, it could be questioned if Augustine would have suggested it as a remedy for today. However, his marriage theology, like a community of love, could be an inspiration to married couples, for families and for households, but also to the wider communities and the individual who wants to re-unite with the relational image of man. In this respect, we could say that Augustine's marriage theology is timeless. What Augustine created with his tripartite good of marriage is the guideline for a human relation in a community of love.

Although concupiscence is to Augustine an undeniable part of human kind (the original sin that marks all of humanity), the community forms a remedy for uncontrolled desires. The *bonum prolis* in

this respect is a 'bodily' instruction for man to go and multiply and to create offspring, children that could be raised as good Christians. Besides, *bonum prolis* is about the friendship between people, the passion and the energy to create something new, to leave something behind for others and to take care of it, with love. The human body is not only the place of the uncontrolled lusts, the body also makes it possible to communicate. To see the other, to make visible what was invisible and to give love. This is the basis for a happy human relationship in whatever context. But as Augustine states, it starts with an equal relationship. The *bonum fidei* extends the friendship towards reciprocity. Faith, or trust, is about accountability: to be there for the other if things get difficult, to invest in each other. But it also means letting go, trust the other, give up of egoistic motives and be open for the other's capabilities and perspective to grow. This is where, in Augustine's theology of marriage, concupiscence can be forgiven, and it is in this relational context of trust where people's weakness can be forgiven, where people can be vulnerable. This does not mean that there is nothing bad or evil, or there is an unlimited freedom. Augustine is quite clear on this, if you choose for a direction or if you decide to live in a community, you cannot retreat when it gets harder. There is a responsibility to endure and to be trustworthy. But the choice starts with the love from a pure heart. To really 'know' each other also means to follow the heart. In more modern context, people say "follow your heart" to be inspired, to be happy, to feel intrinsic motivated.

As Bennet shows us, the questions 'What have we hope in?' and "Why?" are essential in the community. Marriage is a community in which people live and love and go their way together side by side. To Augustine, this is headed towards the ultimate end in God²⁹⁸. But every community needs a higher goal. It is a means to have people aligned, same direction forward towards the future. If there is no purpose, there is no development to strive for. The *bonum sacramenti* is to Augustine the ultimate consummation and perfection of marriage. How the community of love of two people, man and woman, the first natural bond of man kind, can reflect the love of God, is most essential to Augustine. It gives the community power and it makes it more than an earthly engagement. The sacramental essence of this community gives it a sense of eternity. Where we are trapped in Being, according to Heidegger, or cannot escape from the context of the text, as in Derrida's philosophy, in deconstructing Augustine's marriage theology, we found that the relationship between people, the love from the heart, and the directness to a purpose could create a sense of timeliness.

Augustine's own life story reflects the struggle to overcome being trapped in the context of time. Augustine met his first companion at an early age and became a father when he was eighteen years old. After fifteen years he had to abandon her because, according to the rules of that time, she was not of his rank. The break up left a trail of blood in his heart and his son Adeodatus ('given by God') died some years later. The tragedy must have marked Augustine emotionally. He turned into the spiritual marriage with God and was baptised. We see how living in abstinence with a community of friends and the relational aspect of being human, was part of his ideal of friendship and community throughout his life. As he wrote in 397 in his *praeceptum*, a rule for the community, be one of soul and one of heart on your way to God.²⁹⁹

It would certainly be interesting how the 'Augustine' in the state of the marriage is connected to the 'Augustine' in other states of life, the widowhood and the holy virginity. And to investigate if his writings on leadership, work and living in a group of people dedicated to God, could tell us more

²⁹⁸ Although 'holy virginity' is better than marriage, marriage is qualified by Augustine as 'good'. According to Bennet, Augustine defines a spiritual marriage and a physical marriage. You could be physically married, while being a spiritual virgin and vice versa. The idea that only virginity leads towards God is not what Augustine emphasises; see also this thesis: "Water is thicker than blood, households and families"

²⁹⁹ *Regula: 1.2 "ut unanimes habitetis in domo et sit vobis anima una et cor unum in Deum"*

about communities in a wider context or show a diversified image on this topic. In the texts as we have read, analysed and discussed, we get to know Augustine as the Holy Churchfather that unfolds marriage as a community of people to love, to trust and to strive towards a higher goal together.

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- 388 *De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus liber unus*
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- 392 *Enarrationes in Psalmos (1-50)*
- 394 *Contra Adimantum Manichei discipulum liber unus*
- 397 *Contra Faustum Manicheum libri triginta tres*
- 397 *Quaestiones euangeliorum libri duo*
- 397 *Regula ad servos Dei*
- 398 *Contra Felicem Manicheum libri duo*
- 398 *Confessiones*
- 399 *Contra Secundinum Manicheum liber unus*
- 400 *De consensu euangelistarum libri quattuor*
- 401 *De bono coniugali liber unus*
- 401 *De sancta uirginitate liber unus*
- 401 *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*
- 405 *Ad catholicos fratres liber unus*
- 407 *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus CXXIV*
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- 412 *Contra Donatistas liber unus*
- 412 *De continentia liber unus*
- 413 *De fide et operibus liber unus*
- 413 *De ciuitate dei libri uiginti duo*
- 414 *De bono uiduitatis*
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- 419 *De adulterinis coniugiis libri duo*
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- 420 *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum libri quattuor*
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