

SECTION 47
Daily Love in Marriage and Family:
Part 9: Friendship in Marriage.

Pope Francis describes conjugal love as *"a union possessing all the traits of a good friendship: concern for the good of the other, reciprocity, intimacy, warmth, stability and the resemblance born of a shared life"* (AL 123).

Conjugal love combines the warmth of friendship and erotic passion (AL 120), writes the Pope. And, he declares, this friendship continues even when passion and emotions have already diminished. After all, it is God's Spirit who gives spouses a new heart, through which love for one another grows to fullness from within (AL 120).

That is why conjugal love is a very special form of friendship: *"exclusive, faithful and open to new life"* (AL 125). It is a form of friendship that must *"grow and mature"* (AL 125). However, one must bear in mind, writes the Pope, that it is a gradual process of growth. After all, we are dealing with two people, who, with his or her limitations, normally show their love in simple, everyday things (see AL 119-120).

Joy plays an important role in friendship. *"Joy must be cultivated in marriage,"* writes the Pope (AL 126). Joy leads to *"an expansion of the heart,"* (AL 126) and can *"even be experienced amid sorrow"* (AL 126). *"It involves accepting that marriage is an inevitable mixture of enjoyment and struggles, tensions and repose, pain and relief, satisfactions and longings, annoyances and pleasures, but always on the path of friendship, which inspires married couples to care for one another, to help and serve each other"* (AL 126).

Anselm Grün OSB writes: *"Friendship is about sharing with each other what each one experiences and feels. While sharing, the experiences become more intense, deeper, livelier. And while listening and telling, friendship grows."* (The Little Book of Good Living, Lannoo / Ten Have, 2nd edition, p. 201).

A Moment of Reflection.

Friendship makes love grow.

*“The love of friendship unifies all aspects of marital life
and helps family members to grow constantly.
This love must be freely and generously expressed
in words and acts.*

In the family, three words need to be used.

Three words: ‘Please’, ‘Thank you’, ‘Sorry’.

Three essential words!

*In our families when we are not overbearing and ask: ‘May I?’;
when we are not selfish and can say: ‘Thank you!’;
and when someone realizes that he or she did something wrong
and is able to say ‘Sorry!’,
our family experiences peace and joy”.*
*Let us not be stingy about using these words,
but keep repeating them, day after day.*

*For certain silences are oppressive,
even at times within families,
between husbands and wives,
between parents and children,
among siblings.*

*The right words, spoken at the right time,
daily protect and nurture love*

(Pope Francis, “Amoris Laetitia” n. 133)