

QUESTION 114

Friendliness or Affability

Next we have to consider friendliness (*amicitia*), which is called affability (*affabilitas*) (question 114), and the vices that are opposed to it, viz., flattery (*adulatio*) (question 115) and contentiousness (*litigium*) (question 116).

Concerning friendliness, i.e. affability (*amicitia seu affabilitas*), there are two questions: (1) Is friendliness a specific virtue? (2) Is friendliness a part of [the virtue of] justice?

Article 1

Is friendliness a specific virtue?

It seems that friendliness (*amicitia*) is not a specific virtue:

Objection 1: In *Ethics* 8 the Philosopher says, “Perfect friendship (*amicitia*) is that friendship which exists because of virtue.” But every virtue is a cause of friendship or friendliness (*amicitia*), since, as Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, “The good is lovable to everyone.” Therefore, friendliness is not a specific virtue, but instead is a consequence of every virtue.

Objection 2: In *Ethics* 4 the Philosopher says of this sort of friend that “he takes everything in an appropriate way whether he likes someone or dislikes him.” But for someone to show signs of friendship to those he does not like seems to involve dissimulation, which is incompatible with virtue. Therefore, friendliness of this sort is not a virtue.

Objection 3: As *Ethics* 2 puts it, “Virtue stands in the middle, as determined by the wise man.” But Ecclesiastes 7:5 says, “The heart of the wise is where there is sadness, and the heart of the foolish is where there is mirth”; hence, as *Ethics* 2 says, it belongs to the virtuous man to be especially on his guard against pleasure. But as the Philosopher says in *Ethics* 4, the friendliness under discussion “desires to give delight and fears giving pain.” Therefore, friendliness of the sort in question is not a virtue.

But contrary to this: The precepts of the law are given concerning acts of the virtues. But Ecclesiasticus 4:7 says, “Make yourself affable to the congregation of the poor.” Therefore, affability, which is what this sort of friendliness is called, is a certain specific virtue.

I respond: As was explained above (q. 109, a. 2), since virtue is ordered toward the good, where there is a specific notion of the good, there must be a specific type of virtue. And as was explained above (*ibid.*), the good consists in order.

Now a man has to be appropriately ordered in communal life (*in communi conversatione*), both in deeds and in words, so that he relates to each individual in a suitable way (*secundum quod decet*). And so there has to be a specific virtue which observes this appropriateness of ordering. And this virtue is called friendliness or affability.

Reply to objection 1: In the *Ethics* the Philosopher talks about two types of friendship.

One of them consists primarily in the *affection* with which one individual loves another. And this sort of friendship can follow upon any sort of virtue. What belongs to this sort of friendship was explained above in the discussion of charity (q. 23 aa. 1 and 3, and qq. 25-33).

By contrast, the Philosopher posits a second type of friendship which consists solely in *exterior words or deeds*. This type does not have the complete nature of friendship, but bears a certain likeness to it, insofar as one behaves in a suitable manner toward those whom he has dealings with (*inquantum quis decenter se habet ad illos cum quibus conversatur*).

Reply to objection 2: Every man is naturally friendly with every man by a certain general love, in the way that Ecclesiasticus 13:19 likewise notes that “every animal loves what is similar to itself.” And this sort of love is represented by signs of friendliness which someone shows exteriorly, in words or in deeds, even to outsiders and strangers. Hence, there is no dissimulation in such a case. For he does not

show them signs of perfect friendship, since he does not behave familiarly with strangers in the way he does with those who are joined to him by a special friendship.

Reply to objection 3: The heart of the wise is said to be where sadness is not in the sense that it brings sadness to one's neighbor—for the Apostle says in Romans 14:15, "If, because of your meat, your brother is grieved, then you are already not walking in accord with charity"—but in the sense that it brings consolation to those who are sad—this according to Ecclesiasticus 7:38 ("Do not be amiss in consoling those who weep, and walk with those who are mourning"). Moreover, the heart of the foolish is where mirth is not in the sense that they make others joyful, but in the sense that they enjoy the mirth of others. Therefore, it belongs to the wise man to bring mutual delight to those with whom he dwells—not, to be sure, lascivious delight, which virtue avoids, but upright delight—this according to Psalm 132:1 ("Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity").

However, as the Philosopher points out in *Ethics* 4, sometimes, in order to bring about what is good or in order to exclude what is bad, a virtuous individual does not shy away from causing sadness among those with whom he lives. Hence, in 2 Corinthians 7:8 the Apostle likewise says, "If I made you sad by my epistle, it does not pain me," and he adds, "I rejoice, not because you were saddened, but because you were saddened to the point of repenting." And so we ought not show a cheerful face to those who are prone to sinning in order to please them, lest we seem to be consenting to their sin or in some way to be encouraging a sort of boldness in sinning. This is why Ecclesiasticus 7:26 says, "You have daughters; keep them chaste, and do not spoil them with your smile."

Article 2

Is friendliness a part of [the virtue of] justice?

It seems that friendliness (*amicitia*) is not a part of [the virtue of] justice:

Objection 1: It belongs to justice to render one's debt to another. But this does not pertain to the virtue in question; instead, what pertains to it is only to live in a pleasant way with others (*delectabiliter aliis convivere*). Therefore, this sort of virtue is not a part of justice.

Objection 2: According to the Philosopher in *Ethics* 4, the sort of virtue that is under discussion has to do with the pleasures and sorrows involved in living together. But as was established above (q. 61, a. 2 and *ST* 1, q. 65, a. 2), moderating the greatest pleasures belongs to [the virtue of] temperance. The virtue under discussion is a part of temperance rather than a part of justice.

Objection 3: As was established above (q. 61, a. 2 and *ST* 1, q. 65, a. 2), to give equally to unequals is contrary to justice. But as the Philosopher explains in *Ethics* 4, the virtue under discussion applies in a similar way to both strangers and acquaintances, to both those we are familiar with and those we are unfamiliar with. Therefore, this virtue is not a part of justice, but is instead contrary to justice.

But contrary to this: Macrobius posits friendliness (*amicitia*) as a part of justice.

I respond: The virtue under discussion is a part of [the virtue of] justice insofar as it is joined to justice as its principal virtue. For it agrees with justice in being ordered toward others, just as justice is. On the other hand, it falls short of the nature of justice because it does not involve the full notion of a *debt* in the sense of someone's being obligated to another either by a *legal debt*, which the law compels him to pay, or even by a *debt that arises from a favor received*. Instead, the virtue under discussion looks only to a certain *debt of moral uprightness*, which is more a debt that is owed by a virtuous person to himself than a debt that is owed to another, viz., that he should do for the other what it is appropriate to do.

Reply to objection 1: As was explained above (q. 109, a. 3), since a man is naturally a social animal, by the uprightness of truthfulness he owes a manifestation [of himself] to others, and without this

human society could not endure. Now just as a man cannot live in society without truthfulness, so, too, he cannot live without delight; for as the Philosopher explains in *Ethics* 8, no one can go through a whole day with sadness or with what is unpleasant. And so a man is obligated by a certain *natural debt of uprightness* to live in a pleasant way with others—unless for some reason it is sometimes necessary for him to make others sad for their own advantage (*utiliter*).

Reply to objection 2: It belongs to [the virtue of] temperance to limit sensible pleasures. But the virtue under discussion here has to do with the pleasures of living in common, which proceed from reason insofar as one individual behaves decently with respect to others. And it is unnecessary to limit these pleasures as if they were dangerous.

Reply to objection 3: This passage from the Philosopher should not be understood to be saying that someone should converse with and live with acquaintances in the same way as with strangers, since, as the Philosopher himself adds, “It is not appropriate to care for or to sadden acquaintances and strangers in the same way.” Rather, the similarity is found in the fact that one must treat everyone in an appropriate way.