

The great Roman Orator and Statesman, Cicero, wrote a treatise "On Friendship" (De Amicitia) which is one of the most beautiful writings on that topic in the history of the race. In it he says that no greater gift has been given man by the gods than friendship.

John Henry Cardinal Newman began his professional life as an Anglican priest. As a result of his scholarly studies and involvement in "The Oxford Movement" in England, he decided to become a Catholic, which he did dying as a Cardinal of the Church. His final sermon to his Anglican congregation which did not know at the time he would become a catholic very shortly, is a rival to the great Cicero's treatise on friendship. I would make the last things I say to you the conclusion of Cardinal Newman's sermon entitled "On the Parting of Friends:"

And now, my brethren, "bless God, praise Him and magnify Him, and praise Him for the things which He hath done unto you in the sight of all that live. It is good to praise God, and exalt His Name, and honourably to show forth the works of God; therefore be not slack to praise Him." "All the works of the Lord are good; and He will give every needful thing in due season; so that a man cannot say, This is worse than that; for in time they shall all be well approved. And therefore praise ye the Lord with the whole heart and mouth, and bless the Name of the Lord." [Tob. xii. 6. Eccus. xxxix. 33-35.] {409}

"Leave off from wrath, and let go displeasure; flee from evil, and do the thing that is good." "Do that which is good, and no evil shall touch you." "Go your way; eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth your works; let your garments be always white, and let your head lack no ointment." [Ps. xxxvii. 8, 27. Tob. xii. 7. Eccles. ix. 7, 8.]

And, O my brethren, O kind and affectionate hearts, O loving friends, should you know any one whose lot it has been, by writing or by word of mouth, in some degree to help you thus to act; if he has ever told you what you knew about yourselves, or what you did not know; has read to you your wants or feelings, and comforted you by the very reading; has made you feel that there was a higher life than this daily one, and a brighter world than that you see; or encouraged you, or sobered you, or opened a way to the inquiring, or soothed the perplexed; if what he has said or done has ever made you take interest in him, and feel well inclined towards him; remember such a one in time to come, though you hear him not, and pray for him, that in all things he may know God's will, and at all times he may be ready to fulfil it.

To quote St. Thomas More in his final letter to his daughter, Margaret, before his death as a martyr at the orders of King Henry VIII:

Pray for me, as I for thee, that we merrily meet in heaven!

Father John