

FREDERIC OZANAM AND FRIENDSHIP

Your nice letter consoled me greatly. Really nothing is more consoling than remembering those to whom one is closely attached in the heart. I think you already said it: the enjoyments of a family are very precious, blood has its innate and unavoidable rights; but friendship has acquired and sacred rights, enjoyments which never give out. Realities and friends are the two sorts of companions that God has given us along the road of life. The presence of one cannot make us forget the absence of the other.

For Frederic, friendship was a precious gift. He was a person who drew people to himself and he always had a group of friends around him. He would share the different experiences of life with his friends. He wrote to a friend before his marriage

As you have shared my sorrow amid your happy plans, I too, surrounded by sadness, smiled at your coming happiness.

He also shared the joy his friends gave him with other friends:

Your letter filled me with joy. I have not kept this joy to myself, since I told it to some of my friends who belong to our little group.

Frederic was not afraid to challenge his friends if he thought that this would help them. He really wanted his friend to share their joys and struggles with him and to be of help to them as he could. He challenged Ernest Falconnet

I realised that you are somewhat reticent with me on just one point, since you doubtless fear to open your soul to me; I mean, to speak about your faith! I am certain that in this matter, revolutions have occurred in your spirit that you never told me about, and in which, nevertheless, I would love to take part, not, of course, to teach you - I couldn't do that, but to share your worries a little and to offer some consolation.

Frederic shared his faith with his friends and really wanted to be able to support them in theirs. His faith was not just personal and inward, but a faith that communicates, a faith he wanted to share with his friends.

Nor did Frederic hesitate to ask for help from his friends.

I feel better when I have poured out my heart into the heart of a friend who is a better person than I am. Without realizing it, in this way you are doing me some good; and these lines that you will read in a few days will have strengthened my heart and will energize me for some time later.

Frederic's example is a challenge for us.

**HOW DO WE SHARE OUR FAITH WITH OUR
FELLOW CONFERENCE MEMBERS AND THUS
PROVIDE MUTUAL SUPPORT FOR EACH
OTHER?**