



## QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING & REFLECTION

### *Growing in Love* (pp. 251 – 279)

1. How does St. Catherine describe the soul's growth in love? What images does she use for each stage? Describe how those images correlate to each stage in the process.
2. How does St. Bernard describe "pure love"?
3. What, according to St. Bernard and St. Catherine, are some of the actions which love of neighbor requires?
4. How, according to St. Catherine, can we know if our love for another is selfish?
5. What is the danger of intimate friendship between men and women who are not married?
6. Why does St. Francis encourage Christians to only pursue *close* friendships with other Christians? Why are such friendships between Christians "excellent"?
7. Why does St. Francis say "particular friendships" are necessary for lay people, but potentially dangerous for religious?

8. What does St. Francis say are the three effects of true married love?
9. In your own words, sum up St. Francis' analogy between food and married, sexual love.
10. Based on that you read in this chapter, list at least three ways that Christian couples can pervert married love and impair the friendship they should enjoy with one another.
11. On what is *your* love of God based? How is this reflected in your actions?
12. In what ways do you regularly fail to love your neighbor? Why is this? What specific steps might you take to remedy the situation?
13. Describe a friendship that has lead you closer to Christ.
14. Have you ever had a friendship that proved "spiritually dangerous"? What attracted you to this friendship? What about the friendship was dangerous for your soul?
15. If you are single and open to being married, or married already, what are some practical things you can do now that will contribute to authentic love and Christian friendship between you and your (present or future) spouse?