

friendship



To those persons whom I have touched  
and who have touched me in friendship,  
especially Charlie, this book is dedicated.  
You are part of me and I am part of you,  
so this book is yours as it is mine.



# friendship

Edited by **Robert Cummins**

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## Foreword

This work, *Friendship*, was originally published by Saint Mary's College Press in 1971. The book was used in schools and parishes to inspire young people through contemporary words and pictures. The original edition has long been out of print, but we recently came across the work in our archives. This work, and its companion title, *Loneliness*, immediately struck us as timeless classics.

The reflections in this work have stood the test of time; the truths within are applicable yet today. The words are thought provoking, meaningful, enduring, and lasting words of inspiration for young people whose hearts long for warmth

and meaning. We made the decision to preserve the integrity of the original works from the 1971 edition; the language in most of the excerpts has been left in its original form. The design and photographs are new. The work represents a blending of timeless, classic words and modern images, bringing age-old wisdom to life with the aid of meaningful images to help the reader enter into deeper reflection.

We hope you enjoy this timeless classic as much as we have enjoyed bringing a fresh edition forward to aid young people in their search for human and Christian meaning.

John M. Vitek  
President, Saint Mary's Press

## Preface

Friendship is an experience all of us have enjoyed to some degree. The memory of a friendship includes gratitude for moments shared, feelings understood, anxieties lifted. And a feeling of self-worth is involved—knowing that something of oneself was given and found valuable by a friend. These are the ideas presented in this book.

Perhaps it happens mainly when we are lost in our friendships or alone—away from them—that we question friendship or are critical of its meaning. We ask ourselves about the quality of our friend-

ships, about the limitations imposed on them by culture or habit; we may begin to suspect that what we called friendship was just a near miss on love. And yet, at the same time, we believe in it so deeply. Such questions and suspicions are also brought before the reader in this book.

In most of the readings and poems here, however, the thrust is positive and hopeful. Friendship is seen as a mind-blower, a fresh wind on the spirit, a glory in life—in other words, a necessity, as C. S. Lewis writes, not in order to live, but to make living worthwhile.



## Part I What Is Friendship?

No one can describe in words exactly what friendship is. Words are inadequate and never seem to say enough when it comes to feelings and experiences.

Friendship is sometimes the consuming joy that threatens to erupt in a scream—and sometimes it is intense pain. It is also many other things. But none of the experiences or the feelings in *themselves* are friendship. Taken together they give us some sort of a picture of friendship. But because the total experience of friendship can only be lived and felt and is not capable of being adequately described in words, the closest anyone can come is a poor description of bits and pieces of personal experiences in friendship.

Friendship establishes a bond between two people that can be broken if one wishes to break it. This ever present possibility of the bond's being broken, along with the fact that it isn't broken, is what creates the peculiar faithfulness which is typical of authentic friendships.

Those who have experienced friendship know that it is forever. It is forever by its very nature and not through some extrinsic quality, even though this being forever depends entirely upon the free will of each friend.



The essence of friendship is entireness, a total magnanimity and trust. It must not surmise or provide for infirmity. It treats its object as a god, that it may defy both.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



The other element of friendship is tenderness. We are holden to man by every sort of tie, by blood, by pride, by fear, by hope, by lucre, by lust, by hate, by admiration, by every circumstance and badge and trifle—but we can scarce believe that so much character can subsist in another as to draw us by love.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

