



Water Is Thicker than Blood: An Augustinian Theology of Marriage and Singlehood

Jana Marguerite Bennett

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This book considers how homes, households, and domestic life are related to the Church. Early theologies glorified the monastic lifestyle as a way to transcend earthly attachments in favor of supernatural goods. Contemporary thinkers have seen that functioning marriages and families themselves can lead us toward a more righteous society.

Jana Bennett insists that both marriage and singleness must be placed in the context of the Christian story of redemption for the questions and problems at stake to be fully understood. She finds that Augustine of Hippo, maligned by modern theologians, is the source of very fruitful reflection on these topics. Most scholars today would agree that Augustine's works have exerted great influence on Western views of marriage, family, and sex. But many would argue that this influence has been detrimental to a healthy understanding of these topics. However, using Augustine's writing, Bennett shows that marriage and singleness cannot be considered separately, that gender issues are important to considering these states correctly and, most important, that the marriage between Christ and the Church is the first consideration in understanding and living these states of life. The water of baptism, Christians' first birth and initiation into the life of Christ, is the primary standard for relationships, rather than familial ties.

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