

The Sanjuanist Triangle and the Reciprocity of Love

Based on the thought of St. John Paul II and St. John of the Cross



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The Sanjuanist Triangle: A Symbol of Reciprocal Love

The Sanjuanist triangle is based on a reciprocal love—a love that is both self-giving and receptive. Love, as self-giving, corresponds to one point of the triangle. This point of love as self-donation connects with another point, forming a line of union. This union is not merely emotional or symbolic, but a communion—an intimate participation in the life of God.

The first movement of the triangle begins with a total act of self-giving to the Almighty. As St. John Paul II teaches, *“To love means to give oneself”*. Once one understands this self-giving act reaching toward another, a line is formed—a connection that creates the reality of *spousal love*. This spousal love mirrors the priestly promise to God, a vow that builds a covenantal relationship.

According to Michael Waldstein, *“A promise builds a relationship”*, and it is precisely this promise that gives shape to the Sanjuanist triangle.¹ In this trinitarian relationship, continuous maintenance of love—through prayer, virtue, and sacrifice—sustains the union.

¹Michael Waldstein, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), p. 24.

Thus, self-giving and spousal love, when united, lead to a relationship of total communion with Jesus Christ. The Sanjuanist triangle, then, becomes a symbol of divine reciprocity: love received and love given back, mirroring the eternal exchange within the Holy Trinity.

