

Seven Cairns on the Mountain of Life

Session 1: Self-Awareness & Humility

St. John Fisher Parish, Rancho Pasos Verdes, CA

The Seven Cairns

- Cairns are stone markers stacked by travelers to show others the way up the mountain
- On the mountain of life, we need cairns to stay on the trail of friendship with Jesus
- The seven cairns: Self-Awareness, Humility, Love, Gratitude, Community, Hope, Joy
- Each cairn builds on the one before. The trail requires each step.

The First Cairn: Self-Awareness

- Self-awareness is the trailhead. Before we climb, we must know where we are starting.
- Three things we need: know where we are, know where we want to go, know where the trail is
- Just becoming aware changes everything. It is the sacred practice of paying attention.
- When something feels off (frustration, anger, loss of joy), it is a signal to stop and take stock.
- The Spiritual S-Curve: our growth has inflection points. Prayer gives us basic spiritual fitness.

The Second Cairn: Humility

Humility Is Not	Humility Is
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having a low opinion of yourself• Self-hatred or self-loathing• Putting yourself down• Being a doormat• Making comparisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Above all, honesty• Accepting the truth about yourself• The both/and of life: gifted and wounded• Letting go and letting God• The courage to stand in your own story

Kintsugi: The Art of Golden Repair

- Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with gold. The brokenness is highlighted, not hidden.
- Christ was raised with five wounds. The wounds were transformed, not taken away.
- Holiness is walking with God despite our imperfection. Holiness is wholeness.

Being Gentle with Yourself

- False humility can become self-loathing. Catch yourself at the first thought.
- Imagine yourself as a child. Speak to that child with kindness.
- God will never be mean or harsh. Be gentle as you accept the truth about yourself.
- Humility is the rope bridge to love. On the other side: only mercy.

Questions for Reflection
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where am I with my growth in wisdom, emotional maturity, and spiritual maturity?• Where am I with my friendship with Christ?• How can I be gentle with myself on this journey?• Kintsugi: What is the broken part of myself that I need to integrate?

Closing Blessing

A Blessing for the First Steps — by Fr. Brendan McGuire

*May you find the courage to stand at the trailhead
and tell the truth about where you are.*

*May you set down the maps you drew for yourself
and trust the ancient markers
left by those who walked before you.*

*May you be gentle with the part of you
that still pretends to have it all together.*

*May you let the gold of God's grace
fill what is cracked and worn and weary.*

You do not need to be whole to begin.

You only need to be honest.

*And the God who meets you at the trailhead
already knows the way.*

Amen.

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