

# Seven Cairns on the Mountain of Life

## Session 2: Love & Gratitude

St. John Fisher Parish, Rancho Pasos Verdes, CA

### The Third Cairn: Love

- Humility is the rope bridge that leads us to God's love
- Three dimensions: God's love for us, loving ourselves, loving others
- The greatest distance in the world is between our head and our heart
- God looks at us and loves us completely and unconditionally
- There is nothing we can do to make God love us more. Nothing to make God love us less.

### Five Blocks to God's Love

Obstacle	What It Looks Like	Exercise to Overcome
Bad image of God	Stern judge, policeman in the sky	Adopt the image of a gentle God who loves like a grandparent
Bad memory of love	We forget best memories, remember only pain	Go back to Galilee: return to where you first felt God's love
Bad image of ourselves	We fear God couldn't love the real us	The airport exercise: imagine Jesus' smile when he sees you
Not familiar with God's voice	The Evil One's voice dominates	Sit in silence; imagine sitting on a bench with God
Trying to impress God	We think love must be earned	The Christ Mirror: let God reflect back who we truly are

### Loving Ourselves & Loving Others

- Once we realize God loves us, we are called to love what God loves
- Be gentle, kind, patient, and forgiving with yourself as God is with you
- Our shame is powerful. God will never shame us. That is always the Evil One.
- When we feel loved in our souls, we become different. We change.
- Receiving love changes us. Loving others in need changes us too.

### The Fourth Cairn: Gratitude

- When we are aware, humble, and have experienced love, our hearts overflow with gratitude
- Gratitude changes the lens through which we see the world
- Being present to the present moment allows us to be grateful

*"God comes disguised as your life. Pay attention to your own life and you will find God." — Richard Rohr*

### The Examen: A Daily Prayer of Gratitude

- **Step 1:** Ask Jesus to open your eyes to see as God sees your day
- **Step 2:** Ask Jesus to guide you to two or three moments of blessing
- **Step 3:** Look for movements of Good Spirits (patterns of virtue)
- **Step 4:** Look for movements of Evil Spirits (patterns of vice). Be gentle.
- **Step 5:** Give thanks to God for the grace of your prayer
- Look over the long haul: week to week. Be gentle. Observe without judgment.

## Questions for Reflection

- What is your image of God? How does it affect your ability to feel loved?
- Describe your Galilee moment.
- Who is a mirror of Christ's love for you?
- For what or for whom am I most grateful today?
- What new habit can I start to become a person of gratitude?

## Closing Blessing

*A Blessing for Those Learning to Be Loved — by Fr. Brendan McGuire*

*May you stop earning what was always free.  
May you let the smile of God  
reach the places you have hidden,  
the rooms you locked,  
the wounds you dressed alone.*

*May you go back to your Galilee,  
to the shore where love first called your name,  
and find that nothing has changed  
except your willingness to believe it.*

*May gratitude become your evening prayer:  
a quiet accounting of the graces  
you almost missed.*

*And may you wake tomorrow knowing  
you are held, you are seen,  
you are more loved than you dare to imagine.*

*Amen.*

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