

Cairns on the Second Mountain of Life: Session 4: Gratitude

Reflection questions:

- For what or for whom am I grateful for today? Why?
- What new habits can I start to be a person of gratitude?
- Practice the Examen, write it in a journal and share your experience

Scripture

- **Philippians 4:6-7—Pray Always**
- **Psalm 95:1-3—Prayer of Thanksgiving**
- **Colossians 3:16-17—Do Everything in Christ**

Thanksgiving Blessing On Waking

(John O'Donohue)

I give thanks for arriving
Safely in a new dawn,
For the gift of eyes
To see the world,
The gift of mind
To feel at home in my life.
The waves of possibility
Breaking on the shore of dawn,
The harvest of the past
That awaits my hunger,
And all the furtherings
This new day will bring.

Cairns on the Second Mountain of Life: Session 5: Joy

Reflection questions:

- Describe a time when God was a God of surprises?
- Share a story of a person of blessing/joy in my life
- What cairn am I stuck at now? What one step can I take to keep me moving forward on the journey

Scripture

- Mark 10:17-22—Rich Young Man
- Luke 6: 43-45—A Tree Known by its Fruit
- Romans 12:9-21—Mutual Love

Silent God

Edwina Gately
Psalms of a Laywoman

This is my prayer—
That, though I may not see,
I be aware
Of the Silent God
Who stands by me.
That, though I may not feel,
I be aware
Of the Mighty Love
Which doggedly follows me.
That, though I may not respond,
I be aware
That God – my Silent, Mighty God,
Waits each day.
Quietly, hopefully, persistently,
Waits each day
And through each night
For me,
For me – alone.

Examen

Examination of Consciousness
(adapted by Fr. Brendan McGuire)

Spend 20 minutes at the end of each day thinking, praying and recording the Examen. Use the below as a model of steps:

1. Ask Jesus to open your eyes to see as God sees your day.
2. Ask Jesus to guide you to the moments of blessing of the day; ask him to lead you to the graces God showered upon you in that day. Think of two or three blessings or moments of grace that you witnessed that day. It can be an action, thought, event, or encountering a person.
3. Look for the *movement of the Good Spirits (pattern of virtue)*. Here you are seeking to identify the pattern of behavior or mindset that led you to experience the blessings or moments of grace. Ask Jesus to direct your mind to the pattern that he sees. Go where he leads you. There is no judgment here; just observe what led up to the moment of grace.
4. Look for the *movement of the Evil Spirits (pattern of vice)*. Here you are seeking to identify the pattern of behavior or mindset that led you to experience the negative moments of the day or times when you were not your best self. Maybe there was a temptation or thought that recurs or maybe there was an action that led you astray. Again, there is no judgment here; just observe what led up to the moment of temptation or weakness or sin. It is very important that one be gentle with oneself and ask Jesus to direct your mind to the pattern that he sees. Go only where he leads you.
5. Give thanks to God for the grace of your prayer

Daily: Write in your journal the thoughts you just prayed.

Weekly: Read over the journal entries of the last week and examine the pattern of the week for the movement of goodness and movement of weakness. Then ask the Lord how you can address any potential ways to modify actions or thoughts to make changes in your life. Be gentle with yourself and do not make any large steps; only baby steps of adjustments. Listen to Jesus. Verify it is Jesus you are listening by asking Mary to verify it is Jesus' voice.

Covenant

(Margaret Halaska, O.S.F.)

The Father
knocks at my door
seeking a home for his son.

Rent is cheap, I say.

I don't want to rent. I want to buy, says God.

I'm not sure I want to sell,
but you might come in and look around.

I think I will, says God.

I might let you have a room or two.

I like it, says God. I'll take the two.
You might decide to give me more some day.

I can wait, says God.

I'd like to give you more,
but it's a bit difficult. I need some space for me.

I know, says God, but I'll wait. I like what I see.

Hm, maybe I can let you have another room.
I really don't need that much.

Thanks, says God, I'll take it. I like what I see.

I'd like to give you the whole house
but I'm not sure ...

Think on it, says God. I wouldn't put you out.
Your house would be mine and my son would live in it.
You'd have more space than you'd ever had before.

I don't understand at all.

I know, says God, but I can't tell you about that.
You'll have to discover it for yourself.
That can only happen if you let me have the whole house.

A bit risky, I say.

Yes, says God, but try me.

I'm not sure –
I'll let you know.

I can wait, says God, I like what I see.

