

Cairns on the Second Mountain

Session 4: Gratitude

Reflection Questions:

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

Scripture

- Timothy 1:3-8 Gratitude Prayer
- Psalm 95:1-3 Prayer of Thanksgiving
- Psalm 107:21-22 Prayer of Thanksgiving
- Philippians 4:6-7

Time to Pray

I got up early one morning
and rushed right into the day;
I had so much to accomplish
that I didn't have time to pray.
Problems just tumbled about me,
and heavier came each task.
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered.
He answered, "You didn't ask."
I wanted to see joy and beauty,
but the day toiled on, gray and bleak;
I wondered why God didn't show me.
He said, "But you didn't seek."
I tried to come into God's presence;
I used all my keys at the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided,
"My child, you didn't knock."
I woke up early this morning,
and paused before entering the day;

I had so much to accomplish
that I had to take time to pray.

The Deer's Cry

(The Confession of St. Patrick)

Translated by John Skinner

I arise today
through strength in the sky
light of sun
moon's reflection
dazzle of fire
speed of lightning
wild wind
deep sea
firm earth
hard rock.

I arise today
With God's strength to pilot me:
God's might to uphold me
God's wisdom to guide me
God's eye to look ahead for me
God's ear to hear me
God's word to speak for me
God's hand to defend me
God's way to lie before me
God's shield to protect me
God's host to safeguard me

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.