

LOVE TO DEATH

Written Before Twenty-One, Lived for a Lifetime



BY ABBOT OSCAR JOSEPH

Brother Oscar Joseph's teachings:

This page summarizes Brother Oscar Joseph's teachings and background. What he teaches to your community (group) is determined by their needs and times available.

Scripture and Church Fathers

Brother Oscar Joseph places a strong emphasis on the foundational role of Scripture and the teachings of the Church Fathers. He encourages the study and meditation of the Bible, using it as a guide for personal and communal spiritual growth. The writings of early Christian theologians and leaders provide a rich resource for understanding the faith and its traditions.

Rule of St. Benedict

The Rule of St. Benedict is often referred to as Scripture's addendum and is a cornerstone of Brother Oscar Joseph's teachings. This Rule outlines principles for living emphasizing values such as:

Prayer: Regular and disciplined prayer is central to deepening one's relationship with God.

Work: Engaging in meaningful work as a form of prayer and service.

Community Life: Building a supportive, loving community where individuals grow together in faith.

Prayer, Meditation, and Contemplation

These spiritual practices are vital in Brother Oscar Joseph's teachings:

Prayer: Engaging in regular, heartfelt communication with God.

Meditation Reflecting on Scripture and spiritual writings to gain deeper insights.

Contemplation: Experiencing the presence of God in silence and stillness, allowing for a transformative connection.

Spiritual Direction

Abbot Oscar Joseph offers spiritual direction to help individuals navigate their spiritual journey. This involves one-on-one guidance to explore personal faith, address doubts and fears, and discern God's will.

Healing Ministry

A significant part of Brother Oscar Joseph's work is a healing ministry, where he shares God's grace in numerous miraculous healings and teaches others how to minister healing to those in need. This involves prayer, laying on hands, and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. His healing services and public presentations are done in a quite reverential style.

Overcoming Fears and Misconceptions

He addresses common fears and misconceptions about God and faith, helping individuals to overcome these barriers and embrace a more intimate and joyful relationship with God.

Living a Joy-Filled Life

Brother Oscar Joseph believes that a deep and joyful relationship with God is attainable for everyone. By letting go of doubts and fears, individuals can experience the peace and joy that come from knowing and trusting in God.

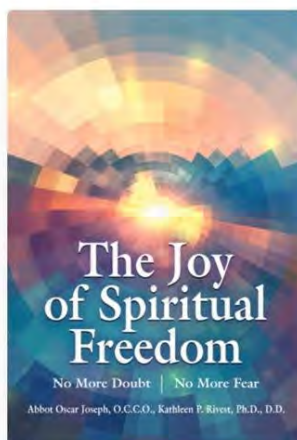
Abbot Oscar Joseph's biography

Education: He holds a Master of Science in Education, doctoral degrees in Sacred Theology (Scripture) and Christian Counseling, and several honorary doctorates.

Ministry: Ordained as a priest in 1993, he was consecrated as a bishop in 2002 and took his final vows as a monk in 1999. He has served thirty-five years as a Christian Counselor, and twenty-five years as the Abbot General for the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross.

Roles: He has served as a TV and radio personality, former pastor of a local conservative Anglican Church, college educator, retreat master, and seminar leader Brother Oscar Joseph is known for his extensive background in education, having taught psychology, sociology, Old and New Testament, English, and ethics at several local community colleges He is also the Founder/President of St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary.

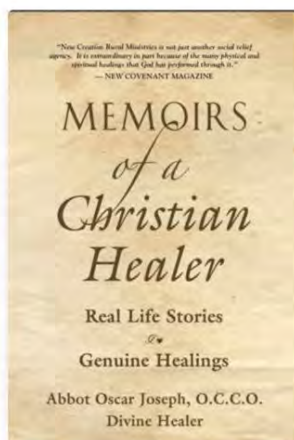
Publications He has authored several books, including "Memoirs of a Christian Healer," "The Joy of Spiritual Freedom," and "Listen with the Ear of Your Heart."



The Joy of Spiritual Freedom

No More Doubts | No More Fear

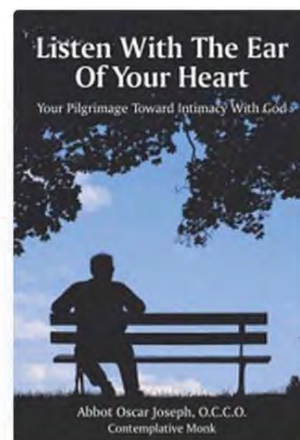
The Joy of Spiritual Freedom is the first of a trilogy that leads and inspires the reader to enter into a joy-filled relationship with a loving God. It is grounded in Biblical wisdom revealing how to remove debilitating doubt and fear. It draws from inspirational letters and case studies that illustrate the Gospel path toward freedom.



Memoirs of a Christian Healer

Real Life Stories | Genuine Healings

Memoirs of a Christian Healer chronicles the miraculous works of God. You will experience the joy of victory and the sorrow of human weakness. Incorporated within the many stories the Abbot includes reflective lessons on the Healing Ministry. The many stories are of real people and genuine healings.



Listen with the Ear of Your Heart

Your Pilgrimage Toward Intimacy with God

God created you to yearn for intimacy with Him. Listen with the Ear of Your Heart presents a dynamic pilgrimage utilizing Scripture, the teachings of the Church Fathers, The Rule of St. Benedict, prayer, meditation and contemplation.

We begin

Dedication *To the seekers of truth, who dare to imagine boldly and live courageously.*

Preface This book was first conceived in solitude, written by a young seminarian who believed that love and death were not opposites but companions. Rediscovered decades later, its message remains timeless: that youth has the power to speak truths worth hearing, and that love, even in the shadow of mortality, is the force that gives life meaning.

The Seminary Cell

The seminary cell was small; its walls bare except for a crucifix that hung above the narrow bed. The air carried the faint scent of incense from the chapel down the hall, mingling with the silence that seemed to press in from every side. It was here, in 1968, that I first began to write *Love to Death*.

At twenty years old, solitude was both a burden and a gift. The hours of study and prayer demanded discipline, but they also opened a space where imagination could breathe. In the stillness, I found myself wrestling with questions larger than my years: *What is the meaning of love? Why does death shadow every human endeavor? And how might the two—love and death—be bound together in ways that reveal truth rather than despair?*

The cell became a sanctuary of thought. Each page I wrote felt like a candle lit against the darkness, a fragile flame that carried warmth and clarity. I did not write with the certainty of a scholar, but with the urgency of youth—believing that words could matter, that ideas could stir hearts, that even a twenty-year-old could speak something worth hearing.

Scripture Meditation: *"Be still and know that I am God."* (Psalm 46:10) In stillness, the voice of God is heard. In silence, imagination becomes prayer.

Anecdote: I recall one evening when the bells tolled for Vespers. The sound echoed through the stone corridors, and I felt the weight of centuries of prayer pressing upon me. In that moment, I realized that my words, though small, were part of a much larger chorus of voices seeking truth.

Love as a Force

Love is often spoken of as a fleeting emotion, a spark that ignites and fades. Yet in the quiet of my seminary reflections, I began to see love as something far greater: a force that shapes the world, sustains communities, and endures beyond the boundaries of time.

Love is not fragile sentiment but a power that moves through human lives with strength and persistence. It is the unseen thread that binds families together, the courage that compels strangers to help one another, the resilience that allows societies to heal after suffering.

Scripture Meditation: *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud."* (1 Corinthians 13:4) Paul's words remind us that love is not passive but active, not weak but enduring.

Philosophical Reflection: To love is to risk vulnerability, yet it is in that risk that life finds meaning. Love demands sacrifice, but sacrifice is not loss—it is transformation.

Anecdote: I once visited a family who had lost everything in a fire. Their home was gone, yet their love for one another remained unshaken. In their embrace, I saw the truth: love is stronger than destruction, stronger than despair.

Death as Transformation

Death is often feared as an end, yet it is also a passage. It sharpens our awareness of life's brevity and deepens the value of love. To embrace mortality is to recognize that every act of kindness, every moment of connection, is precious.

Scripture Meditation: *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die."* (John 11:25) Christ reframes death not as finality but as doorway.

Philosophical Reflection: Death does not destroy love; it reveals its eternal nature. In the shadow of mortality, love shines brighter, reminding us that what we give to others endures beyond our own lives.

Anecdote: I remember standing at the grave of a dear friend. The sorrow was heavy, yet in the prayers spoken, I felt love's presence stronger than ever. Death had not silenced love; it had amplified it.

Youthful Imagination

At twenty, imagination is bold. It dares to speak truths that older voices may hesitate to utter. Youth is not weakness but strength, for it carries the courage to dream and the audacity to act.

Scripture Meditation: *"Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity."* (1 Timothy 4:12)

Philosophical Reflection: Imagination is the seed of transformation. What begins as a thought in solitude can become a movement that changes lives. The courage of youth is not recklessness but vision—the ability to see beyond what is and to imagine what could be.

Anecdote: I recall presenting my early writings to a mentor. He smiled and said, "You are young, but your words carry weight." That affirmation became fuel for my imagination, proof that youth can speak truth.

Rediscovery

Decades later, the manuscript was found again, its pages aged but its message was alive. The rediscovery was not nostalgia but affirmation: those words written in youth can still inspire.

Scripture Meditation: *"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."* (Isaiah 40:8)

Philosophical Reflection: Rediscovery is itself a form of resurrection. What was buried in an attic has risen again to speak, to teach, to inspire.

Anecdote: When I held the old manuscript in my hands, I felt as though I was meeting my younger self again. The words were aged, but the spirit behind them was alive.

A Call to Courage

Love to death—not as destruction, but as devotion. To love fully is to accept mortality, and to face death with courage is to affirm the power of love.

This book is an invitation: to live thoughtfully, to act meaningfully, and to let love be the force that defines your life.

About the Author Oscar Joseph, Archbishop and Abbot General of the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, has dedicated his life to teaching, reflection, and spiritual leadership. His youthful writings continue to inspire seekers of truth across generations. You can find some of his most recent works at: www.AbbotOscarJoseph.com.

Love to Death

I am concerned about your love, or lack of love. We are all painfully seeking love. We search fruitlessly in corners and under tables—unlikely places—but not in ourselves. If we do not love ourselves, then to love others will be quite impossible. We must see ourselves as individuals of infinite value, unique among those around us. We must come to know ourselves for what we really are, to see the concrete aspects of our personality, void of illusion and self deceit. Only after we have done this can we share our love with others.

Our love for God is not unlike our love for our neighbor. We might even say that the way we love our worst enemy is the way we love God. As shocking as this might seem, it is true.

The legalist would say that we love God by following His commands and love others by performing good deeds. We all have our special way of loving God. But who loves God by loving those around him? We will not get to heaven alone, but only with others. We will either go horizontally, with others, or we will never make the trip.

People seek alcohol, drugs and perverted love to escape from the worries of this world. They see love in a perverted, erotic manner. Love was never meant to soothe the cares of the world. It was never meant to color the evils of man's creation or change them into something good. Love never removes us from the reality of the world. Instead, it makes us more aware of its sting. Love attacks us like a two-edged sword. It shakes our very roots and severs them from the earth. It crucifies us upon the crosses of others.

Love brings us suffering, yet Christ demands it of us. Time after time He pleads on His knees that there be more love. Why is He so intent on making us suffer?

It is ingrained in our very nature to love and to seek the love of others. We reach to God and yearn for His love and give Him all the love we can. This love makes us like Him. It unites us with Him. We become His friends and are somehow released from the slavery of this world. We find ourselves no longer attached to things as the only reason for existence. We understand the reasons for death, pain, existence and all the problems of life. We find ourselves using things of this world as a means to heaven. We enjoy the pleasures of life as a prelude to those of heaven.

Suddenly, we see the world as we were meant to see it in the light of love.

We are so hypocritical in our love! We say that we live in the light of love, yet we hate our brother. The white man does not recognize his image in the black man. The black fights the white for his rights or tries to become white, thus surrendering all he has, his heritage. We fail to love even those in our homes. Our sisters and brothers are not objects of love but conveniences. Our parents, if they are living, are merely providers who are never repaid. And if they are dead, they are quickly forgotten. We say we are enlightened, but I say that he who does not love his brother still stumbles in the dark.

We scurry at Christmas to buy gifts for people to whom we feel obliged to give something. Yet, we do not see these gifts as an extension of ourselves. We give things but never ourselves. We concern ourselves with external works always admiring our own virtues, yet all the while accomplishing nothing. Our efforts are wasted, for all that we have done was not done out of love. It is like trying to sew without thread.

We call for love and charity, but fail to seek them in God, where they are only found. If we do not pray for them through Him, they will never

Our checking account will never buy them come. Real love is only found in God. We must pray much, for as we pray, we love.

Love to Death was not written to answer any questions, but simply to demonstrate love in real life and to show its practical value in a pragmatic society. Each chapter is prefaced by an essay concerning the particular love discussed in that chapter. It is followed by several short stories to further demonstrate that love. The book is divided into three parts: God's love for us, our love for Him and our love for each other. I do not speak of eros or agape. I do not present an unapproachable ideal. Instead, I try to demonstrate the reality of love. The stories are taken either from my personal experience or from my readings. Their themes are not to be passed over lightly.

When you love do not say that you have God in your heart, but rather that you are in the heart of God. When you ascend the highest pinnacle of joy in your love, do not be discouraged when you fall. When you remember yourself, you do not love. When you become others then you can measure your love. The more you lose yourself the more you are in love.

I pray that the fire of your love will not be a will o' the wisp. May it not be an illusion of fire that neither kindles what it touches, nor gives any heat. We were conceived for eternal happiness; that happiness could be ours if we all would love.

GOD LOVES US

God has used every possible means to show His love for us. Yet, we, in return, are demanding a sign of His love. History clearly shows how God shaped the Hebrew people. He led them out of bondage through the perils of the desert and into the promised land. He fed them manna when they were hungry and gave them water from a rock when they thirsted. And when they complained of the manna, He gave them quail. He even went so far as to show His presence among them by fire at night and smoke during the day. He protected them in battle and helped their nation grow. In short, He did all He could for those people, making them His chosen ones.

The Hebrews denied God and preferred their own way. Yet, God never left them. Instead, He gently molded them into a nation that would survive the ages. And out of that nation came His only Son. He so wanted them that He made His son one of them.

Christ continued His Father's work of love and ultimately opened the gates of heaven for all people. He loved us so much that He died for us, suffering a humiliating death on the Cross.

As if this were not enough, Christ went a step further and established a Church to represent Him on earth, to rule and guide His flock with the same love and concern. He is now alive on earth in that Church. If your neighbor had done half that much for you, you would certainly think much of his love. Yet, God loves us ever so much more.

God lives with us now. Life tells us that. We could hardly experience the joys we do without the loving hand of God. Even our sorrows are in God's plan.

As He provides the birds of the field with food so does He furnish us with the things we need. All we have to do is ask and it will be ours. God is all around us telling us that He loves us. He is in the people with whom we come into daily contact. He is in a sunset or a beautiful flower. His love is reflected in all He has made. Open your heart to Him and He will surely enter into it.

Jesus is a Real Person

If they knew nothing else, the people of Jerusalem knew that Christ was a real person, a human being very much like themselves. They saw Him as a warm, loving person who attracted thousands to follow Him, thousands that were so attracted to Him that they would disrupt their daily lives for Him. It was Christ's human warmth that attracted these people. They could not see beyond His humanity; yet they loved Him. The closer they came to Christ the more they could feel His warmth. His personal loving concern drew them close to Him. Others became jealous of Christ because they realized that He had something that they did not have, namely—love.

Unlike those Jewish followers, we know that Christ was both human and divine; yet we fail to see His warmth and love. We would prefer the pagan god of social prestige that demands sacrifice with no lasting reward to a God who asks our love in return for inestimable joy.

Come For the Sinner

All through the New Testament we see Christ forgiving those who did wrong. He made them happy because they came to Him. Rather than rebuke the penitent sinner, he comforted him. Christ demanded that he who has not sinned throw the first stone. Christ realized the weakness in mankind and loved that weakness, and it was for the weak and the sick that He came to cure. We see Him constantly rejoicing over the lamb that returns to the fold. Yet, today, almost two thousand years later, we have forgotten this. Do we always look for Christ's forgiveness and pray for it? We do not see the confessional as an encounter with Christ. We do not see the priest as His loving administrator. We fail to see the Church as His instrument of peace on earth. Is it Christ who has changed, or have we?

Your Friend

Although Christ had known that Lazarus was ill and in danger of death, He did not go to Lazarus until after his death and burial. Finally, He did go to Lazarus' home to seek his sisters and to comfort them. One of them ran to Christ and asked: "Why didn't you come when you were told of his illness? You could have prevented his death. Now it is too late." "Where is your sister?" He asked softly. "She is at the tomb with the others," the girl answered bitterly. Christ walked to the tomb, which was on the top of a small hill. There were many there weeping and crying aloud.

"Where is your brother?" He asked the other sister. "He is dead in the tomb. He has been there many days." "Lead me there," He demanded. Jesus stood in front of the tomb and wept for Lazarus whom He loved. He then called out: "Lazarus, come forth, Lazarus, come forth." The crowd silently marveled as they saw Lazarus walking out of the tomb still wrapped in the shroud. Jesus has a human heart like yours but He is far beyond your friend. He is God your Savior who loves you as much as He loved Lazarus. Jesus brings you life for all eternity.

Come Close to Us

Often a large crowd followed Jesus as He walked through Jerusalem. They were rough people clinging to the new prophet. The streets were always crowded and only those close to Christ could clearly see Him. "Who is that in the tree looking at me?" Christ asked Peter. "That is a rich man of the city, known by all to be a sinner." "You, in the tree," Christ shouted. "Come down, I am going to stay at your house today."

The little man came down and prepared his home for the Lord. "Lord," he said, "whomever I have wronged I will pay him back four-fold. I promise not to sin anymore." The Lord was pleased at what He heard. Peter asked Christ why He had gone out of His way for this man. "Because I love him, Peter. I seek out all sinners because I love them and want them to come close to me so that they may love me also."

Cry Aloud

Although the windows were open the hospital waiting room was hot. An hour ago, the nurse had informed me that my wife might die giving birth to our first child. Later the doctor told me that her death was imminent and that they might have to take the baby from her. "Are you sure my wife will die?" "Yes, there is no chance for her." "Dear God," I cried as he left the room. "Dear God, no, not my wife. Please let her live. Take care of her. She is good and loves you. Don't take her from me and her baby. We need her. I call to you, Lord, I cry aloud. Hear me, hear me."

Tears streamed from my eyes. I fell into a chair and bent over. Two hours passed that way.

The door opened. The doctor appeared and he was smiling. His face was beaded with sweat, but he was smiling. He was beaming with joy. "What is it?" "Something happened, a miracle. Your wife lives and you have a beautiful child."

Helping Hand

The wind was stiff but not yet dangerous, so the apostles restively leaned back and enjoyed the sway of the sail and the glide of the water beneath them. Night was slowly approaching, and Peter could see the sun still hanging in its place above the surrounding hills. But, not long after, it was consumed by the very hill upon which it was perched. As the darkness consumed them the wind became unusually strong and threw the waves over the boat. The apostles, however, were good fishermen and did not fear the sea, to which they had long been accustomed.

Hours had passed and, since they were making good time across the sea, by morning they would be on the opposite shore. It was then that Peter noticed a figure walking on the water several yards from the boat. More out of fear than anything he pointed it out to the other apostles. It was James who recognized the figure as the Master.

Christ raised His hand to them and said, "Fear not; it is I."

Peter resumed his native courage and cried to the Lord, "Bid me come to you, Lord."

Keeping his eyes on Jesus he rose from the boat and stepped into the sea. The waves rose over his waist and again he became fearful. As he took his eyes from those of Christ, he began to sink.

“Lord, help me,” he yelled in desperation, for he had lost all confidence in himself. “I am sinking.” And at once the Lord took his hand and raised him from the brine.

Comfort

A scream pierced the air as they drove the spike into the waiting hand of the Jew who called himself the Christ. He had aroused the people of Jerusalem and supposedly tried to supplant the ancient religion of the Hebrews. He was radical, long-haired, bearded and was known to associate with the worst of the people and frequently drinking at banquets. Now he was being eliminated from society in what the people thought a most convenient manner: they were hanging him from a cross between two thieves. He had tried to steal the empire from the Romans and cheat the Jews of their hope for a Messiah by claiming that He was the promised one.

With a thud the cross fell into place and the throng stared at the bleeding flesh that hung before them. It was pleasing to them to see the agitator hanging there helpless.

He was a strange one indeed. He had neither tried to escape nor had He argued before the judge. He had offered comfort to the women crying for him on the road to Calvary. Even in His pain He had not asked anything for Himself, and yet He gave to others. Hanging on the cross one of the thieves mocked Him, but the other pleaded for salvation from his neighboring sufferer. He had asked eternal happiness from the man who was helpless. Soon after Christ died, the temple curtain fell to the ground and the earth shook under the dark sky.

For Us

We read daily of men dying in Vietnam. We are told of heroism and of one man saving another's life. Yesterday, a friend told me a fantastic story. Apparently, this marine in the midst of a bloody battle had sacrificed his own life for those of his friends. My friend was impressed by his heroism and the love this man had shown toward his friends. Yet, he seems to remain indifferent to the death of Christ which happened in much the same manner.

Concern

They were carrying the only son of a very old widow to the grave and the whole city mourned the death. Even the children wept. The woman was now left alone.

In another part of the city a beggar was yelling, “Lord, Lord, help me.” No one listened to the call coming from outside of the crowd. Then Jesus raised His hand to command their silence. He was about to speak.

“Lord, Lord,” continued the beggar, “help me.” The silence bore witness to the beggar's plea.

“Bring that man to me,” ordered Christ.

“What will you have me do, blind man. What is it you want?”

“Lord, that I may see.”

Jesus bent down, spit on the dirt of the street and made mud with His hands. He then placed this on the beggar’s eyes and said, “go wash.”

“Peter what is that coming our way?” asked Christ. “It is a widow bearing her dead son to the grave.” “Yes, let’s go to her,” said Christ. “Woman, where is your son?” “Here, Lord on the pallet.” After ordering that the pallet be laid down, Christ went over to it. He leaned over the dead man, breathed on him and said, “rise and walk.” Tears came from the mother’s eyes as she saw her son living again.

Beside Us Always

Ask a child, a man on the street, a housewife or a student where God is and, invariably, they will say—in heaven. Ask them where heaven is and they will look at the sky, some faraway place. People are not convinced that God is with them always, constantly telling them of His love, shouting it through all those around them, through the very world they live in. He never leaves them and, like a loving father, is always helping, inspiring, blessing and forgiving. Tell people that and they will laugh but watch them laugh and see if they are really happy.

Dangers

Everyone should watch the Saturday morning television comics at least once. You will find yourself marveling at the heroism of Superman and Lightning Lad and all the rest as they save the beautiful Miss from one pitfall after another. James Bond, 007, behaves in much the same manner. It is incredible how he can escape from the most impossible situations. We appreciate this heroism and bravery. We enjoy watching heroine after heroine escape from perilous dangers, but we do not see ourselves in equally dangerous situations and the grace of God saving us from worse pitfalls than death.

Trust

“Abraham.” “Yes, Lord.” “I want you to build an altar and on it offer your son to me. Do this before noon tomorrow.” Abraham shook with fear. His faith was but a seed, and yet this God demanded so much from him. He wavered in his understanding. The Lord made a covenant with him and now his son was to die before the promise had unfolded. That very son who was to be the foundation of a new people.

Early the next morning he and his son set out for the mountain. The climb was hard and soon they became fatigued, but noon was at hand, so they pressed on. His son had not known why they were doing this but followed his father realizing that it all had a purpose.

“Go get some rocks,” Abraham said to his son, and together they built an altar. “Lie here on the altar my son; it is now time.” “Time for what?” the son asked. “Why do you want me to lie on the altar?” “Do as I ask.”

So, he did. Abraham drew his sword and raised it to the heavens. He looked at his child. Sweat dripped from his face as he swung back to give the mortal blow. But the Lord stayed with his hand.

“I withhold no good thing from those who trust in me,” said the Lord.

Give Thanks

The modern world takes so many things for granted. Household appliances are no longer luxuries. The car is not a convenience but a necessity. We rarely see women washing clothes by hand and hanging them in the open air to dry. Our cities have become a jungle of rushing people who have blurred faceless mass. We all have become like the other. We have numbers instead of names. Without a piece of paper, we cannot drive, vote, drink, shop or hardly even take a breath. Yet, these are not the worst evils of society. The worst evil is our lack of appreciation. How often has anyone of us stopped to thank Christ for dying for us?

OUR LOVE FOR GOD

Our love for God stems from His love for us. If He had never loved us, then our love would be futile. Yet, shamefully, that is what it is. We love God only when and how we desire. When things are going well, we love; when they are not God becomes the butt of all our troubles. We would never think of turning to Him for help unless, of course, nothing else worked. Time and time again we fail to see Him as an object of love. He has become a coin machine into which we insert little and expect much in return. God does not work this way. He gives to those who love Him and He does not give things as we would hope. Things are not important to God. Happiness is His gift, not wealth, beauty or charm. God wants us to come to Him, and we constantly close our doors. We never hear Him knocking because we are making too much noise ourselves, too much noise about ourselves. We are so caught up in the wonderfulness of our own being that we cannot get involved with anyone else, much less with a God who is so far away.

We would rather have a God who is impersonal, perhaps even an idol that we could carry in our pockets and control. We even want to control God. We want Him as our own personal tool to obtain whatever we desire. We would rather pay pagan homage to a dollar bill than to a God-man Who died for us. We want something that we can put in our

hands and call our own. Yet, we do not see God within us yearning to be possessed with love. God wants our love. He needs our love. Why is it that He even bothered to come to earth and spend thirty-three years? He is waiting for us to come right out and sincerely say: “God, I love you.” He wants that as much as we want it from those we love. How we sadden Him with our petty thoughts and futile sensual love.

We want to enjoy the pleasures of life. We want to be submerged in the materialism of a profane society. We do not see the holiness that is about us. We close our eyes to the obvious. We do not hear God falling on His knees and begging for our love.

If you want happiness, long to be filled with joy and lead a prosperous life—love.

Do you have it?

It was Christmas time again and we were off to see what the town had to offer in the way of gifts. As usual, the city was jammed with shoppers and traffic was even more congested than ever. My friend was looking for a particular pair of shoes, and we had to look all over for them. None of the city stores had what he wanted so off to the neighboring towns we went to store after store, show fit and show fit.

“Don’t you have that shoe? Where do you think I could get it? We have already been there.”

By this time our patience was running short. We found ourselves becoming irritated at the salesman.

“Why don’t you have that make? No, I won’t order them, I will only be in town for a few days, thank God. Why don’t you have that make, why?”

Time after time they replied, “Sorry, but I can’t give you what I don’t have.”

Four hours later we ran into a little out-of-the-way shop and sure enough they had what he wanted. The proprietor asked, “Why didn’t you come to me first?”

“My friend, now pale with fatigue, replied, ‘We didn’t know where you were.’”

To Love

Christ asks us to do two things: to love God with all we have and to love our neighbor as we do ourselves. He asks us to love God because He knows that in doing so, we become like God. By loving something higher than ourselves we are released from the sin-slavery of this world. He does not ask us to know the intricacies of the Trinity or moral dogma; He asks us simply to love Him, for the love of God is better than the knowledge of God.

Half-hearted

My cousin, who plays for the local high school football team, tells me much of what goes on during practice. It seems that one day a particular player was sitting out the practice. He didn't want to run with the others or get in the line-up or get into any other team activities. Later the coach came to him and asked what the problem was. He said that he didn't feel like playing that day. "Fine," said the coach, "and nor will you play in the next game."

All

Every year around Christmas time in a certain town in Spain, there was a festival in which everyone gave something to the Savior. It was a small church and not really much to look at, but it had miraculous bells. These bells would ring only when the most perfect gift was given to God. The townspeople thought it was the word of God thanking the giver for his gift.

On the day of the festival, the whole town gathered in and about the church to listen for the bells. The king led the procession with his golden crown, which he laid before the altar, but the bells did not ring. Then, the queen with her beautiful jewels came before the altar and laid them over the crown, but again the bells did not ring. Others came forth to give their gifts to the Savior, but the bells did not ring.

Pedro had been sent to the store to buy some bread for his supper. Because they were very poor his mother had given him just the right change for his bread. As he walked by the church, he saw the wealthy of the city giving to the Savior and hoping that the bells would ring for them. He, too, wanted to give me something, but all he had was supper money. Pedro walked into the church and down the aisle toward the altar. All wondered what this poor boy was doing in the church. Pedro placed his peso on the altar and turned out to walk. Suddenly, the bells began to ring and ring and ring.

Don't Be Afraid

When a man falls in love with a woman it is genuinely difficult to come right out and tell her that she is loved. You try to show her that she is loved, but you want to come right out and tell her, even shout the words. Then when you do, the words get jumbled and you feel like a fool, a happy fool. It is the same way with God. But don't be afraid to call our Lord by His name—Jesus—and tell Him that you love Him. He is waiting for you; He needs those words.

Tell Him

We often compare God to our fathers when we are asked by little children what God is like. He is like your father; He is kind, loving and we go on and on. Yet do we really see Him as a father, caring about us, and being proud of us and giving us a hand when there is no one else to help? Do we come to Him only as a last resort?

A father wants to know how much his children love him. I remember a father asking his son how much he loved him. It was summer and both the father and the son were fishing by a rather small stream. The fish were not biting, but that did not matter; they were together and having a ball just sitting there.

The father asked, "How much do you love me?"

The son without even stopping to think, said, "A mil-lion, mil-lion, mil-lion."

Love and Understanding

Almost every Sunday after Mass I hear someone complaining. Either the Mass is too long, or priest could not be understood or some similar trivia. People have a right to complain, but what good does it do to complain among themselves? Why not go to the pastor and air out their grievances? But before they go, I wish they would ask themselves if the Mass is too long or boring because they lack love and understanding.

No Love

We see long-haired, bearded people on the street shouting, "the end is here, repent," and we laugh. We are so confident that we will live on and on and never die. John the Baptist and Christ were long-haired and bearded and yelled the very same thing and they, too, were laughed at. Things haven't changed very much.

Hurt

Remember the old axiom, "it is easier to forget the happy things of life than the bad." We are constantly reminding ourselves of the good things, but the bad try to push them off. I think it is the hurt of the bad things that scares us and that scare is the thing that will not go away. We can sometimes forget about it, but it is still there if we are to look at it. We are forever hurt by our neighbors' lack of charity toward us. Yet do we never think of the hurt we give to others because of our lack of charity, or the hurt we give God because we refuse to love.

Sorrow

The rain was beating against the windshield, and the road lamps made strange figures dance across her face as she drove carelessly to nowhere. She had become angry with her family and was out driving to escape the turmoil in her home.

An hour had passed this way before she decided that she should return to her little brats and niggard husband. As she was turning her car around, a truck appeared out of nowhere, slid with a screech of brakes, and drove her into the embankment. All that could be heard were her screams. She was trapped in the car. She yelled and screamed for help, but no one was there. Then she sobbed for what seemed to be eternity. Suddenly, the car caught fire. She renewed her efforts to escape. Her hand became free, her arm, her shoulder, but she remained trapped. Realizing she was going to die she screamed again, only this time with pain and sorrow, "I am sorry, I am sorry." That ended abruptly. Her arm became stiff, then limp.

Prayer

There is an infirmary in the Shadowbrook Jesuit Novitiate outside of Lenox, Massachusetts, where the retired fathers spend their last days. It is sad to see them walking on the grounds, heads drooped, many with walking sticks, others being pushed around in chairs by novices. I often think of all the work they have done for Christ and how deeply rooted their love for Him must be. Surely, they will get to heaven.

I talked to one of these old-timers and he babbled on for hours trying to give me a bit of wisdom. "Son," he said, "do you know what I pray for every day? Perseverance. Yes, after all these years I have to pray that I may hang on. I don't want to leave Christ. I don't want to fall out of love with Him, and prayer is the only way to hang in there."

I Love You

One afternoon I was travelling by bus from Albany, New York, to Springfield, Massachusetts, and found myself reading *Franny and Zooey* by J. D. Salinger. Franny's fanaticism with the constant repetition of the word *Christ* somehow stayed with me. She thought that it would work like the Hindu word *Aum* to sharpen her concentration and love of God. The other night in chapel this thought of repeating words came to me. I tried repeating the word *Christ* several times over. Then I tried *God* and all the various names we have for the Deity, but they did nothing. I had not increased my concentration or love one iota, but, rather, had become frustrated with the whole idea. So, I sat there for a few minutes longer and found myself whispering, "I love you, I love you," over and over again. I could not stop there but kept saying it louder and louder until I thought all the visitors had heard me. I knew what I was saying and I really felt what I said, but I could not understand why I should be saying that particular phrase. I did not stop.

Count the people that you love and count the people that love you. Is it strange that the numbers are about equal? We love those who love us because it is easy and most often advantageous. If we love our parents, we find life in the home happier and more profitable. But why love those who cannot give anything?

Socially a person is of worth when he functions in a serviceable manner. The higher the quality of this service, whether it be manual or intellectual, the higher the value of that person. But is a person worth loving? Love is not functional. Love is giving, not getting. Love does not care about things but cares only about giving. Love is a reflection of our Godliness. Strange but we cannot divorce God even from human love. Human love must transcend the material and reach the spiritual, or love becomes erotically utilitarian.

Love, whether it be for a fellow human or for God, is a slow process of becoming the beloved. You actually become the person you love.

Saying it wherever I go, "I love you, I love you," and that has changed everything.

If you love people below your status, you become like them. If they have faults you take on their faults. If they are God-like you will become God-like. Love is becoming another.

Did you ever stop to realize that each of us carries with us our own world? Each of our lives has a history, a heritage and a definite future. Each person has an infinite ability to love, and in that ability, he reflects God. Some people would go so far as to say that God is in each of us to the same degree that He is in the Eucharist. If we love Him under the forms of bread and wine, why can we not love Him in each other?

To love another leaves us open for hurt and a great deal of unhappiness. Yet, the converse is also true. If we open ourselves to others, we are subject to inestimable happiness; a happiness that will give us a glimpse of the divine that is in each of us. Are we brave enough to open those doors of the heart and soul?

Lose Self

Last year I had the opportunity to visit a very dear friend of mine at her home in New Jersey. She had been married for some time and had several children. Her youngest daughter, who was seven, was the most beautiful of them all.

Because all the children were home from school, Clair had to prepare lunches, iron clothes, intervene in quarrels and perform all the other duties that fall under the care of a mother. During a lull in the activities, she collapsed into the nearest chair for a breather. With things quiet, she looked at me with a smile that told me of her happiness in marriage, the joys of all the children and her fulfillment in love and loving. Just then her youngest daughter darted in, stopped in front of Clair, looked up with a wistful eye and said, "Mommy, will you kiss me?" Clair's face shone as she leaned down to the

dirty-mouthed child. Their kiss was long, beautiful and so loving. I could not help but remember that Clair almost died when the baby was born.

Giving

It was the older boys at summer camp who had to suffer the cold of the early hour swim class, the chills after leaving the water and the towel that never seemed to offer any warmth. Thursday was particularly cold and neither I nor anyone else wanted to go into the water. Most of the boys claimed that they could see ice floating on the lake, although we knew that it was quite impossible. An hour had passed in this manner of acute torture. I have reason to believe that the instructor took pleasure in watching our little bodies shiver and grow lumpy with goose bumps. I had gotten out of the water earlier than the others and had tried to warm myself in my towel but, as I had imagined, it did not work. It did stop the polar air, however, and that much was a relief. I had noticed Frank, a skinny fellow, shy and not well liked by the rest of the campers, getting out of the water. He never could stand much of anything, and this biting cold air seemed to be getting to him. He went for his towel on the upper beach, but the guard stopped him, for ascending to those hallowed grounds was forbidden during class time. So, he stood there and shook, blue with cold. I had thought of giving him my towel, but that would leave me in the cold and not so esteemed in the eyes of the other guys. But I couldn't help feeling for him as he stood there, a skinny blue thing, shaking like a leaf in a gale. But how could I give him my towel? There were the guys to think of and besides, I, too, was cold and wanted all the meagre comforts the towel could afford. I looked at Frank's eyes and saw that they were the same color as mine and was genuinely surprised. I thought that maybe he was even more like me inside and just would not show it. I remembered that he liked pickle sandwiches and so did I. "Here Frank," I said, "take this and warm yourself."

Give Yourself

I have many fine neighbors on my street. We mind our business and they mind theirs. Somehow, that became the norm and they have stuck to it pretty well over the years. But this rule was fractured with our nearest neighbor, and we became close friends. She used to tell me of her husband, now deceased, and all she had learned from him. She told me that on one occasion she had accumulated all the old clothes in the house for the parish charity drive and, feeling that what she had not enough to give, she gathered some good clothes as well. Her husband, realizing her good intentions, told her that she was foolish and that they could not afford to give so much, especially the good things. "What can I give," she screamed. He answered, "Let us, you and I, give and give of ourselves unselfishly, not things but ourselves."

I was not there at the time, but I have been told that years ago there was a hurricane that ripped through my hometown leaving only fallen trees and torn houses behind.

My Grandmother was at work when the storm began. She thought that it would be nothing more than a gale, but the sky blackened, and trees were falling by the time she was dismissed from the mill to return to her children at home. She lived about a mile from the mill and, by the time she had gotten halfway home, telephone poles were being torn from their bases and live wires lay across the streets. Some of these wires were still spurting and jumping wildly as she tried to dodge their electric charges. Out of fear, she started to run towards her home which was now in sight. She could see her children's faces peering out of the window and her eyes remained on those faces as she ran. A shattering crack pierced the air, and an old oak tree fell on her, pinning her to the ground. She laid there with a branch in her side, half crushed, bruised and panting. The two children rushed from the house and, with a desperate effort, freed her from the weight of the tree. Together, they helped her into the house where they waited out the storm, happy to know that the other was now going to be safe.

Constancy

"Joseph, would you make me a table for the kitchen?" "Sure, just how do you want it?"

Mary was in the back of the shop cooking some bread and desert potato. The sun was hot, and the dust of the town hardly offered any comfort to the traveler. Joseph was known to be a good carpenter. He was trusted by the townspeople as a man who was always around when needed, whether it be for a table, chair or just a helping hand. Joseph showed a constancy of love and affection toward his wife and child that seemed to spread to all those around him. He was, for that small town, a beacon that lit the night and settled into the dust.

Trust

The cheers of Christmas were rapidly followed by those of the New Year. Everyone was happy and had not a care in the world, for the New Year held promises never before imagined. The snow was shoveled from the walk, the punch was well spiked, and the fire blazed against the—

...cold of the frost. It was about eleven when the Christmas tree caught fire. Dad had been up with Mom, but the tree spread its flames too quickly for them to put it out. Soon the house caught fire. Their thoughts raced to the four of us in our rooms. Dad went up to get us and Mom stayed by the door to usher us out. I had been sleeping in the attic that night instead of in my room because I liked the cold air. Not finding me in my room, Dad assumed that I had gone with the others, so he retreated outside. I can remember being awakened by the choking smell of smoke and then hearing my mother's yell.

"Timmy, Timmy, where are you?"

Fear gripped me as I rushed to the door. It was too hot to open. I tried the window, but it was frozen fast. My father was yelling, "Timmy where are you?" I could hear them outside. I saw the flames burning the door and the smoke pouring in. The house was engulfed in smoke, and I thought I would die coughing as I broke the attic window.

"Timmy is that you?" my father cried.

"Dad, Dad, help, I'm up here. I can't see you. Where are you, Dad?"

"I can see you, Timmy. Jump, I'll catch you."

"But I can't see you, Dad. Where are you?"

"Don't worry, Tim, I will catch you. Trust me, I will catch you." The fire was now in the room. "Dad," I yelled as I jumped. He caught me.

Little Things

A mother's day is so full of small things that it seems as though she never really gets much done. There are clothes to wash and iron, food to prepare, dishes to wash, the house to clean and so many other things that are all too often taken for granted. Yet, all these little things are done out of love, and are really worth so much.

So, Few

Last night I was sitting in the living room listening to the popping of the fire, and for a while I watched it dance. But my thoughts wandered and soon followed my sight and hearing. I wondered about the world and the problems that faced mankind, the war, civil strife, poverty and all the rest. I thought of love and those I love. I even began to count all those who love me, as if their number was some great accomplishment of mind. But I guess I should not have done that, because I found that there were very few on my side. I asked myself, why so few? Then I asked how many I loved. I counted my family, a friend or two and then, no one. Where were all the other people I knew, the hundreds that I met? I only loved a few of them. That is why so few love me.

Speak

There is a small but beautiful park not far from my home where I love to go. I have spent a lot of time there thinking, reading or walking in the woods. One day a squirrel and I played a game of what is lying under my tree. At least that is what I had imagined the creature was thinking. I would lie still, and he would come as close as he dared, look at me for a while and scamper off. Each time he became braver and would come a few feet closer. All I could think of was his innocent curiosity and the old adage of killing the cat. But the squirrel never heard of it, I am sure, so he just kept coming closer. It was rather hard not moving for such a long time, but my curiosity was whetted as I wondered just

how close he would come. He had gotten within a foot of my shoe, and I just could not hold back. I jumped with a yell and that was the last I ever saw of him.

It was the sunset that I admired most in the park. How it would set over the trees and cast its final piercing rays over the lake. The rush of the water from the golden bowl held me so tightly that I found myself gasping for breath. It was to this symphony that I brought my dear friend Tim. We had known each other for many years and had become like brothers.

“Tim,” I said, “why is it when a man likes another man he never comes right out and tells him so? Why are we so afraid of displaying our feelings to those we really care about? Tim, I love you and you know I am not afraid to tell you, nor am I embarrassed because I know you feel the same.”

Happiness

Many people have told me that they love me, and, for each time and person, I am most grateful. Sometimes they tell me in ways that bring me great joy, like the time the youngest girls at summer camp came running to me wildly when I returned after being away for a week. They clutched my knees and waist yelling, smiling, and some even crying; they had missed me.

Once I was consoling a teenager, trying to convince her of her parents’ love for her and before she left, her eyes still damp, she said that she loved me more than anyone else. I suppose the most shocking was the time a male friend told me that he honestly and sincerely loved me. The joy that those words brought me I cannot convey. What I like best, though, is when I return home after being away for a time and embrace my mother and father. I tell them that I love them and hear those same words come from them. We all have moments like these, when those who are dear to us tell us that we are loved and needed. Those words bring happiness to us. If a human love brightens us here, imagine what love in heaven will be like.

Bored

Time after time I see people falling into the old rut. They form a plan for life, a schedule, and stick to it no matter what. I suppose things get done, but they leave themselves little time for breathing, breathing life, I mean. They live in it but they don’t seem to enjoy it. They can put away their office work and return home, flick on the television, rush to supper between commercials, then back to the television and, finally, fall asleep before it. Not all people are like this but each of us has a rut that we neatly fall into. For many, their very state of life demands a certain course of action, a schedule. So, we live it and complain of the boredom, the monotonous boredom. There is really little we can do to break this monotony unless we dare to love.

Life of Love

My love has brought me from the cradle of infancy through the tottering's of youth. It has dragged me through the mire of life and brought me to the brink of destruction. Stumbling, I have fallen only to rise, scared by wounds inflicted by others. But all the while I have been happy.

End of story

About the Abbot

Abbot General Oscar Joseph Known by many as Abbot Oscar Joseph, has excelled as chaplain, bishop, pastor, abbot, seminary president, and spiritual guide, offering not only leadership but presence and care across many communities. Ordained as a priest in 1993, Brother Oscar Joseph, OCCO has not only officiated at worship and sacramental moments but has also invested deeply in the training of future caregivers and hospice volunteers. His gifts in bereavement counseling— both individually and in groups—are matched by his calm discernment and disciplined, intuitive decision-making. In all his leadership roles, he has provided comfort, guidance, and hope. Brother Oscar Joseph, OCCO, accomplishments extend to academia—with several advanced degrees and the honor of receiving the Excellence in Teaching Award at Davidson County Community College in 2007. His credentials as a certified sex therapist with UACCI, as well as active membership in the National Christian Counselors Association, reflect his wide-ranging commitment to education and healing. Yet, beyond all titles and accolades, what stands at the heart of Brother Oscar Joseph, OCCO journey is his dedication to God's healing and reconciliation ministry. Having witnessed and been part of the healing of hundreds of bodies and souls, his deepest fulfillment comes from the profound encounters with God's presence—both in the quiet moments of mystical prayer and in the lives transformed through his service. For him, it is this ongoing relationship with God and participation in the ministry of healing and reconciliation that remain the most meaningful, shaping his every step and inspiring all who know him. In every phase of his life—shepherd, counselor, teacher, healer Brother Oscar Joseph, OCCO exemplifies a vocation grounded in love, humility, and the desire to bring wholeness and hope to others.

Love to Death This was initially written while I was in the Roman Catholic Seminary. My goal was to write and publish a book before I turned twenty-one. If you have read my current books, etc., at www.AbbotOscarJoseph.com, I hope you will see some maturity. Yes, even at twenty, I was called doctor by all the fellow seminarians as they lined up at

my door seeking counseling. So, we have all started somewhere. The hope is that we finish in a better place.

As a side note, I feel led to say that I was not perfect in my twenties nor am I in my seventies.

All the way through grammar school I was led to believe that I was a slow learner. No one realized back then that I had astigmatism and dyslexia. I was treated with tutoring to spell better!!! A neighbor called me “a late bloomer”. I was sent away to a boarding school so I could get more educational assistance. No one noticed that I had been reading psychology books for years, so that I would be prepared to help other, and later theology books intended for college students.

I had to repeat ninth grade to be admitted into boarding school. My academics did improve due to four to five hours of studying each day. But even with that the school counselor told my parents that I should not go to college but go to a trade school.

I went to seminary college and did academically okay. Later I enrolled into grad school and grades were A and B. The most encouraging thing was when I friend of mine who had a doctorate told me it was not so much about being intelligent but my willingness to sweat. Well, I knew how to do that. After I received my first doctorate in Christian Counseling, I thought it might be fun to get a second doctorate in Scripture. If I had more accurate loving encouragement my life would have been easier and perhaps, I would not have gotten beat-up by grammar and middle school classmates so often.

My father was a great model of hard work. Although he did try to encourage me by saying, “you are not too ugly.”

I hope that my story is encouraging to many. Remember love is a verb not a noun. Loving is an action not a state of emotional distress.

Having said all that let's take a reflective look at love. We can be enlightened to go deeper into most things than we do. Wisdom comes from moving slowly.

Thematic Overview

- **Love of God**
 - Repetition of “I love you” as prayer and transformation.
 - Love as mystical union and surrender.
- **Love of Each Other**
 - Family bonds: mothers, fathers, children, and the daily “little things.”
 - Friendship: openly telling a friend “I love you” without fear.
 - Compassion: giving a towel to a shivering boy, or oneself instead of possessions.
- **Sacrifice & Trust**
 - A father catching his son in a fire.
 - Children freeing their mother from a fallen tree.
 - Neighbors teaching that true giving is of the self, not things.
- **Human Vulnerability**
 - Love opens us to hurt but also to divine joy.
 - Monotony of life broken only by daring to love.
- **Transformation**
 - Love makes us “become the beloved.”
 - Even wounds inflicted by love can heal and bring happiness.

Reflection

Love to Death is not a polished theological treatise—it is something rarer: the raw voice of a young man daring to write about love before he turned twenty-one. What makes it timeless is not its age but its honesty. Here, love is not abstract; it is lived in kitchens, camps, storms, and fires. It is whispered in prayer, shouted in desperation, and revealed in small acts of care.

Reading this book today, decades later, we see the seeds of a vocation rooted in love. The stories remind us that love is not a possession but a gift, not a feeling but a transformation. To love is to risk, to trust, to give, and ultimately to become more like God.

Discussion Guide

- What does the phrase “*Love is becoming another*” mean in your own life?
- How do small daily acts (“little things”) embody love more than grand gestures?
- Why is trust central to love, as seen in the father catching his son?
- How does love break the monotony of routine?
- What risks are involved in loving openly, and why are they worth taking?
- How does the book connect human love with divine love?

Highlighted Quotes

- “Love is a giving not a getting. Love is a reflection of our Godliness.”
- “Love, whether it be for a fellow human or for God, is a slow process of becoming the beloved.”
- “If we open ourselves to others, we are subject to inestimable happiness; a happiness that will give us a glimpse of the divine.”
- “Don’t worry, Tim, I will catch you. Trust me, I will catch you.”
- “There is really little we can do to break this monotony unless we dare to love.”
- “Wounds inflicted by love are the only wounds that can make us happy.”

Sometimes moving slowly means really go deep. Take a little time and reflect on the following.

Week 1 – Love of God

Reading: Early passages on whispering “I love you” and the transformation of prayer.

Themes:

- Love as surrender.
- Repetition as devotion.
- **Reflection Questions:**
- What happens when love is spoken aloud repeatedly?
- How does prayer change when it becomes love language?
- **Exercise:**
- Spend 10 minutes repeating “I love you” in prayer. Journal the feelings that arise.

Week 2 – Love of Each Other

Reading: Stories of family bonds, Clair and her daughter, and “Little Things.”

Themes:

- Love in daily acts.
- Love as service.
- **Reflection Questions:**
- How do small acts of care embody love more than grand gestures?
- What “little things” in your life are expressions of love?
- **Exercise:**
- Perform three unnoticed acts of love this week. Record how they felt.

Week 3 – Sacrifice & Trust

Reading: The fire rescue (“Timmy, I will catch you”) and hurricane story.

Themes:

- Trust as the foundation of love.
- Sacrifice as love in action.
- **Reflection Questions:**
- What does it mean to risk love?
- How do you build trust with those you love?
- **Exercise:**
- Recall a time you trusted someone completely. Write about how it shaped your relationship.

Week 4 – Human Vulnerability

Reading: Camp towel story, “So Few,” and reflections on monotony.

Themes:

- Love opens us to hurt.
- Love breaks routine.
- **Reflection Questions:**
- Why is love risky?
- How does love disrupt monotony?
- **Exercise:**
- Identify one “rut” in your life. Try breaking it with an act of love.

Week 5 – Transformation

Reading: “Love is becoming another” and “Life of Love.”

Themes:

- Love changes identity.
- Wounds of love heal.
- **Reflection Questions:**
- How does love make us more like the beloved?
- Why are wounds of love different from other wounds?
- **Exercise:**
- Write about someone you love deeply. How have they changed you

Week 6 – Love Eternal

Reading: Closing reflections and foreword.

Themes:

- Love as divine union.
- Love as the path to maturity.
- **Reflection Questions:**
- What does it mean to “finish in a better place”?
- How does human love prepare us for divine love?
- **Exercise:**
- Compose a prayer or poem of love to God, inspired by your journey through the book.

Bless you. You can do well in this life by becoming love.

*“This book was born in a
seminary cell, but its
heartbeat echoes through
decades of ministry, friendship,
and healing. These are stories
not just of love—but
of becoming love.”*



