

THEME — THE BEGINNING OF LOVE...

The Beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves, and not to twist them to fit our image. Otherwise we love only the reflection of ourselves we find in them.

Thomas Merton, No Man Is An Island

Read [read passage twice]

Silence 3-5 minutes - silently repeat a word or phrase that interests you...*

Sharing aloud (if in group): Simply share the word or phrase that spoke to you. No elaboration.

Reflect [read once]

Silence 3-5 minutes - reflecting on "Where does this touch my life?"

Sharing aloud: "I hear, I see, I was struck by..."

Respond [read once]

Silence 3-5 minutes - reflecting on "How is God calling me to Respond?"

Sharing aloud: Briefly pray - spontaneously expressing your response to God's call.

Rest [read once]

Rest in God's grace, in silence 2-3 minutes

*

The time allotted for each period of silence can vary.

Prompts:

- 1) Why do we so often find it hard to let those we love "be perfectly themselves"?
- 2) Does this statement ring true for you? Have you ever had someone you loved try to twist you into their image of what you should be? Have you ever done that to those you love?
- 3) Merton seems to be suggesting that God whose love is perfect, loves us in a way that simply allows us to be what we are without twisting us to meet God's expectations. How do you understand the demands of faith in light of this concept?
- 4) Both Jesus and the Apostle Paul suggest that we should cease passing judgement on others (recall the parable about removing the log from your own eye before presuming to aid your neighbor in the removal of the speck in theirs). What other passages of scripture seem to support this idea?