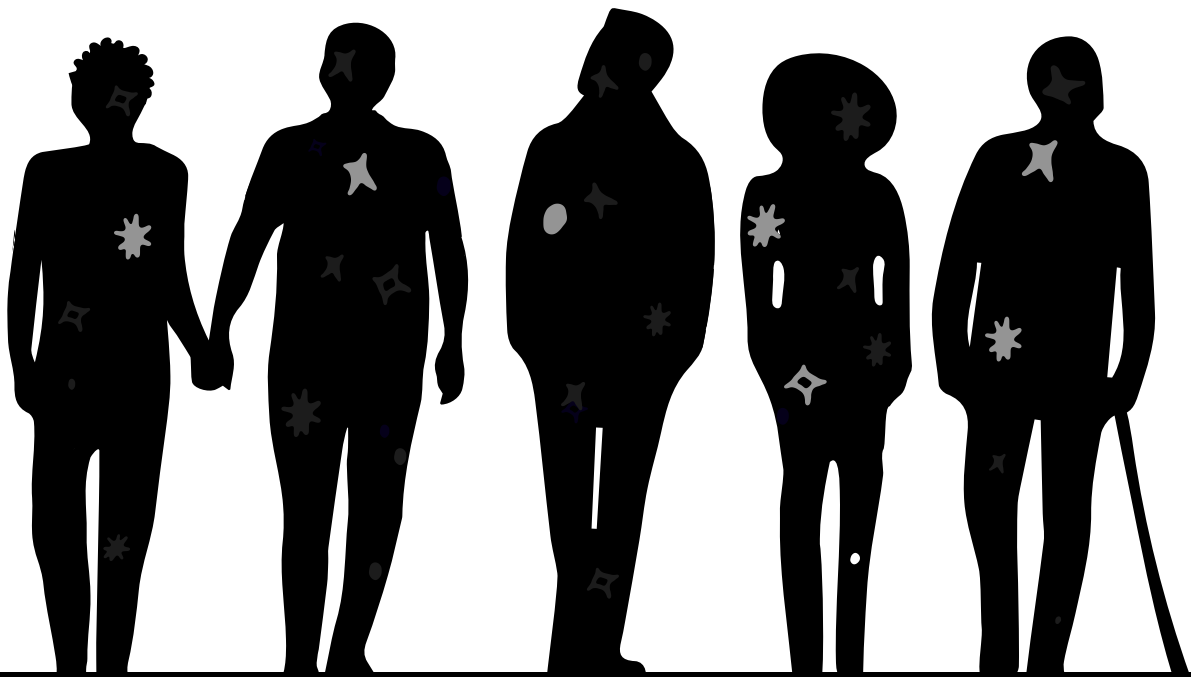


THE COSMIC WE

Episode 2:
Reimagining Notions of Love

with Fr. Richard Rohr



from the CENTER FOR ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION

Richard Rohr: Justice for me is the practical name of charity, of love if you will. But as we've seen the word charity so sentimentalized, individualized, individual acts of niceness toward nice people, it lost its power. Charity without justice is sentimentality. It gives you a positive self image but it does nothing for the world, nothing for the neighbor, nothing for the other.

Donald Bryant: This podcast explores the mystery of relatedness as an organizing principle of the universe and of our lives.

Barbara Holmes: We're trying to catch a glimpse of connections beyond color, continent, country, or kinship. And we're going to do this through science, mysticism, spirituality, and the creative arts.

Donald Bryant: I'm Donny Bryant.

Barbara Holmes: I'm Barbara Holmes. And this is A Cosmic We.

We're honored to have Father Richard Rohr with us today. Many of you are familiar with the life and the work of this great spiritual teacher, but for those who are unfamiliar with his work, Father Richard is a Franciscan priest ordained to the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church in 1970. In 2011, PBS called him one of the most popular spirituality authors and speakers in the world. He founded the Center for Action and Contemplation, A School for Prophets, engaged in the work of justice and spiritual connections to the divine through contemplation and the study of mystics through the ages. But here's what's important to me. Here's what drew me to the work of the center. I mean, if you told me a few years ago that I would make the spiritual journey from a UCC church in New England to speaking in tongue and baptism in the spirit during tent meetings in Texas to my current work with Father Richard, I wouldn't have believed it.

What drew me to Father Richard was his ecumenical teaching his witness to deep wisdom of Christian mysticism. Father Richard teaches how God's grace guides us to our birthright as beings infused with divine love. He's the author of too many books to name, the most recent, The Universal Christ, the Wisdom Pattern, Just This and Falling Upward. Read a few of them, it'll change your life. Welcome to The Cosmic We, Father Richard. We know each other, but you may not have formally met my co-host, Dr. Donny Bryant. Donny, please say a few words to Father Richard.

Donald Bryant: Father Richard, this is probably one of the greatest honors that I have had to meet you in person. As we start this conversation, I want to say that your work, your witness, your scholarship, but also your heart has truly influenced my ministry, myself as a person, my family. Much of my theology has evolved and has been influenced directly through your work. Not just your theological work, but also your work with the Enneagram. You being a catalyst for so many people. And so as I started my journey of self-discovery, your work has been truly influential there. So I just want to say thank you and what an honor and privilege it is to be here with you.

Richard Rohr: Well, you're welcome. My, you make my day. Thank you. Thank you for your trust. If anything I've said is helpful to a man and woman like you two, all I can do is rejoice.

And we're living in a time where this is possible.

Barbara Holmes: Yes.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. And where even the Pope agrees with me.

Barbara Holmes: You recently saw the Pope, didn't you?

Richard Rohr: Yes, in June he invited me. It's still, I have to pinch myself that I talked to him in a closed room, just the two of us. It was wonderful. He's a very loving person. Very empathetic. Yeah. So thank you.

Donald Bryant: To me, not many people have that privilege of sitting down with the Pope. I mean, I'm sure much of the conversation was private, but is there anything you could share with us that you're able to share about that meeting that could really bless some of our listeners?

Richard Rohr: He humbly said at the beginning, "I don't speak English very well, but I can listen to you very well. I'll just be following your lips." And you could tell he was intensely. And whenever I'd share something like the Pentecostal part of my life or he'd just chime in, keep doing it, keep saying it, keep teaching it. I think it was a Catholic boy's dream.

Barbara Holmes: Oh yes.

Richard Rohr: To have a Pope, our big father figure tell you that what you were doing was good. It was really, I still have to pinch myself that it happened. And I took a little delegation with me, a few from here at the CAC, and then they all came in and they got to talk to him. And I think part of it is he's being persecuted very much by the Catholic right. He knew I had been much more in my early days, but persecuted also. So there's something that draws you together when you've both been through the same kind of trials and tried to keep a positive faith-filled attitude. And so I think we were drawn to one another. He invited me, which still blows my mind.

Barbara Holmes: How did you become a Franciscan?

Richard Rohr: Oh, well, I was born in Kansas, boring flat Kansas. And in the eighth grade I read a life called *The Perfect Joy of St. Francis*. It was a rather romantic biography, but still beautiful. And it's hard to believe that someone would read that and not say, "I want to be like him." And that's what happened in my mind. And then very soon after two brown robed friars came to our parish to preach, and I was in awe. They gave me an address to write to and that made all the difference. I wrote. And that sent me off to the Franciscan Seminary, a decision I never have regretted.

Donald Bryant: Father Richard, as you talk about that experience, one of your, I would say, landmark works is your book, *The Universal Christ*. You mentioned your Pentecostal history, and both Barbara and I have had a history in that movement also. So we share that in common. But your work, the *Universal Christ* has really opened up tremendously my understanding of the blueprint, the Christ blueprint. For those who have not digested

the book, I would love to hear your summary of the thesis behind the book of the themes that you really wanted the readers to really gather from this work. And this is truly, from my perspective, a transformational book. It's a book that everyone in the world should read. And I say that with great humility. It's a tremendous book. It's a book that I think will stand the test of time. Could you share with us your purpose in writing *The Universal Christ*?

Richard Rohr:

You know what I'm first going to say will sound like, well, this is some new trendy idea. And the irony is the notion of Christ as an archetype for history, for the human journey, for the cosmic story goes back to the fathers of the church in the first four centuries. In fact, they knew it more than we do. It was taught consistently, well not consistently, but where it was taught was more in the Eastern church. Now as you know, the Roman church is called the Western Church and the church based in Constantinople, today Istanbul was the Eastern church. And we not so happily separated in the year 1054. So when you good Protestants came along, all you had to react to was the Roman church at best. And we were only half a piece of the pie. And two of the pieces that were most missing was the contemplative piece, which was taught better in the Eastern church and the cosmic global notion of salvation.

So with that as a little preface, it comes down to distinguishing between Jesus and Christ. And I start somewhere in the book saying, "Christ is not Jesus' last name," as a lot of us think. But Christ is a title revealing universal truth. He revealed the Christ. He became the Christ. But he was, first of all Jesus. Jesus is the personal relational manifestation of the mystery. And Christ is the global universal. And if we don't discover this soon, especially as we just sent out a new telescope last month, that we're talking about something that's universal. And as soon as they, if they, I don't know, discover life on other planets, lot of Christians are going to say, "Well, did Jesus save them? What did Jesus have to do with them?" And were suddenly with a huge problem.

So this issue is very important that you and I, going back to the earliest creeds of the church, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, we believe in Jesus and Christ. Two affirmations and one is personal, the other is universal. If you have both, you have the potential to have a very healthy religion. We wouldn't have had all this trouble with diversity, for example, that you have suffered so much from, if we would've recognized that the Christ was a universal truth and had nothing to do with sectarian anything. And because we didn't get that straight, we've had trouble with diversity for 2000 years. Very sad to say. So we got a lot of catching up to do.

Barbara Holmes:

There are a lot of people who don't even understand what the power is in contemplation. I mean, you really trust this path of contemplation. I'm going to just give you something you said. You said, "One can't really look at life and society from an egoless position except through the lens of prayer, particularly in the emptying form of prayer that we call contemplation." Could you just say a little bit more about that?

Richard Rohr: The word contemplation first emerges among the desert fathers and mothers in the first centuries after Christians start realizing that the main line Christianity is so watered down already. And they create the word contemplation to be really a counterpart to the word prayer or a synonym for the word prayer, where it means an actual change of processing, a change of mind. Paul talks about this as you know in several places, but a lot of people pray, I'm sure I did my early life with my old mind, which was my American mind, my white boy mind, my Catholic mind. All of which added little bits of truth. But they weren't the universal mind. And that's what contemplation is, where you access the whole. Now that's the way the mystics think. They think in terms of the whole not the part. And we are still fighting over the parts.

My part's better than your part. What a waste of time, an absolute waste of time because once we identify with the part instead of the whole, we're set up for a very, really painful history of violence, judgment, anger, trying to prove that our part's better than your part. And every one of our groups did it. Now we Catholics had the right word, as you know. Catholic means universal.

Barbara Holmes: Yes.

Richard Rohr: But I said that to the Pope. I said, "How did we universalists get it so wrong?" He just laughed that we became protectors of a part that was more Roman, more European, more white. And we pushed that as if it was Catholicism. It's falling apart at a massive scale right now.

Barbara Holmes: Certainly is. And you mentioned the trouble that we're having with diversity, not just in the nation, but in the world. Why do you care so much about justice? Where does that come from, Father Richard?

Richard Rohr: Justice for me is the practical name of charity, of love, if you will. But as we've seen the word charity, love so sentimentalized, individualized, individual acts of niceness toward nice people, it lost its power. Charity without justice is sentimentality. And that's not an exaggeration. It gives you a positive self-image, but it does nothing for the world, nothing for the neighbor, nothing for the other. And that people can't see that is just astounding to me. Charity is fashioning your own positive superior image. I'm charitable, I give money at Thanksgiving or whatever.

Barbara Holmes: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: That's not going to change the world in the least because it affirms my group as the charitable ones and the others as the needy ones who we wish would stop needing and be like us.

Barbara Holmes: To follow up, there are a lot of people who share your views, but they're afraid to speak out. I mean, most dominant culture people are uncomfortable with the issue of race. They don't know how to talk about it and you don't seem to be uncomfortable just speaking out of your heart about a very difficult issue. Talk about how you're able to do that and perhaps it'll help others to do it also.

Richard Rohr: Well, I don't know how much, well you probably do or Donny does, but people know about Franciscanism. Francis always identified with the minority with the excluded. I went to Assisi after Rome last month and the little church that he rebuilt was the little church of the leper colony. And he immediately went down to those excluded from uptown Assisi and identified with the lepers. So that's always been a part of our tradition. We were really a subtext in terms of mainline Catholicism. I was ordained a deacon in 1969. You're always a deacon for one year before you were a priest in the modern era. And the first six months they sent me out here to New Mexico to work with the Acoma Pueblo.

So my first chance at pastoral work and preaching was with a minority. And then the next six months was at a black parish in Dayton, Ohio, Resurrection Parish. For me, this little white boy, I'm preaching to black people every Sunday. I thought, what do I have to say to them? Well I'll tell you. It was very easy. You know why? Because they affirm the preacher. White people don't do that. They just sit there and say nothing. You don't know whether they're listening or... Well, the black people in Resurrection Parish, we became good friends because they were just, "Amen. Amen." They were Catholics, but they hadn't lost their black intuition. Is that the word? I don't know.

Barbara Holmes: Yes, yes. Cultural insights.

Richard Rohr: So my starting in ministry was outside the mainstream and then you realize how the mainstream isn't very main. It's just dominant and that's different. So that got me off to a great start. And then the Pentecostal experience with those young boys happened the next year after I had become a priest. And I said, "Well what happened to this?" this beautiful polyphonic singing in tongues that we'd sometimes go 20 minutes and people would come and peek in the door of this high school gymnasium and said, "And they're Catholics." They couldn't believe. So that again for me, legitimated the margins instead of the so-called center.

Donald Bryant: And a lot of your work, Father Richard, you speak to this concept of union or unitive oneness. In some of your work, and maybe it was a talk that I heard some years ago, you had stated that what it means to be Christian is to be able to see the Christ in everything or everyone. And I found that to be such a powerful, powerful statement when you talk about how do we get away from seeing the other as the other and beginning to see us in the other, seeing the connection, the oneness. And there seems to be a common theme in a lot of your work that deals with oneness and getting away from this dualistic way of thinking and seeing and perceiving the world. Can you speak a little bit more about that? Because I've found that to be very helpful as I am part of a multiethnic and multicultural community, even multi-denominational community and that particular concept of seeing the kinship, seeing someone as family, as one as connected versus as something else different.

Richard Rohr: When you stop seeing Christ in others, really in everything, the sad price you pay is you can't see Christ in yourself. I mean, you know this better than I, how many Christian racists? You hear them talk or see them operate and you want to say, "That man really hates himself, doesn't he?" But it never occurs to him how much he hates himself. He's projected all of his hatred onto people of other races or other religions.

It's these guys in Georgia who just chased down this young black man out jogging. What made them think he was their problem? So either you see God in everything or you end up not seeing God in anything. And the big price is you can't see God in yourself, which is the whole point to recognize that you are an image of God despite all of your sins, failures, limitations. That isn't the issue. Christianity is not a moral matter of moral perfection. You never get there. I'm almost 80 and I'm not close.

Barbara Holmes: None of us are.

Richard Rohr: None of us are. It's a mystical matter. And when I say mystical, I mean you use the word at the beginning, a unitive matter. It sees everything in wholes, it sees everything connected first. It sees the connection before the disconnection. Now Americans tend to see the disconnection. And when you start with that, you never get back to the connection. It's even on our coins, "E Pluribus Unum," I had to study Latin for six years.

Barbara Holmes: So did I.

Richard Rohr: Out of many, one. We have it on the penny, and we don't have it in the human mind. Out of many God has made one.

Barbara Holmes: Not being able to see God in others or in yourself I think is what Oscar Romero was referring to. Let me just share this little quote with you. He says, "I will not tire of declaring if we really want an effective end of violence, we must remove the violence that lies at the root, social injustice and repression." That it's the lack of loving and seeing Christ in one another that is the root of structural violence. What do you think about that?

Richard Rohr: It sounds so simple that I bet even some people who just heard you say it say, "Oh yeah, oh yeah." It's not any living recognition. It has to be a heartfelt, body felt, eye seen, tasted recognition that we all are the many parts of the body. And Paul goes to great lengths to teach this and Jesus gives us what we call the Eucharist to experience it. But we Catholics, we even use the mass, the Eucharist, to prove who's worthy to go and who isn't worthy to go when in fact, as Pope Francis says, "It's food for the unworthy," which means we're all welcome. It's not a worthiness contest. This has to be known existentially to use a postmodern, but good word. It can't be known superficially. It has to be known in your very existence.

And it gets even more ironic. After you've lived a while, you find that it's easier to see in suffering people, in wounded people, in rejected people than it is in people who think they're normal. At the Nuremberg trials Adolf Eichmann I think either coined the phrase or he got him from Hannah Arendt the banality of evil.

Barbara Holmes: Yes.

Richard Rohr: And because so many of these Nazis were very educated Germans, civil, polite, that evil has to become everyday normal for us to buy it. That's been found in the tradition. Desert fathers and mothers, Thomas Aquinas for us, the whole philosophical tradition said that evil to get away with its evil has to disguise itself as good.

Donald Bryant: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: That's a universal principle. You wouldn't do evil unless you thought, oh this is good to keep the white people in control. This is going to help the world. You've got to tell some big lies. Big lies.

Donald Bryant: What comes to mind, Father Richard, is this idea of relinquishing control. Relinquishing control. Actually remember seeing a quote from you that the opposite of faith is not doubt. The opposite of faith is control. Right. The opposite of faith is not doubt. The opposite of faith is control. So our need to be in control.

Richard Rohr: The way I used to teach it, it still will be the same. The opposite of faith is certitude.

Barbara Holmes: Yes.

Donald Bryant: Yes. Okay.

Richard Rohr: Which amounts to control. And this is the lie, forgive me, I don't mean to be unkind to anybody but of fundamentalism. It's in love with certitude. It isn't in love with Biblical faith.

Donald Bryant: That's it. I'm glad you... Let's rest there for a while. That's good.

Richard Rohr: Biblical faith unites knowing with not even needing to know because God knows. That leads to great humility. And if a person isn't humble, they usually don't have faith, they're just religious.

Barbara Holmes: There's something about the faith walk that makes you crave certitude. I mean you're walking, you're being asked to walk on water, being asked to trust. It's amazing that we don't create even more idols than we do in our society because we need to be certain about something.

Richard Rohr: And God must understand that. But what God seems to be trying to lead us toward is certain about his love and goodness, not about any idea, not an idea of goodness, an idea of truth. That's what's made us so arrogant that we think we have the truth. In a form of words, what did Jesus say? "I am the truth." Truth is a person personified in the way a human being operates. And how does he operate? In an inclusive, loving, universally forgiving way. A Jew who honors everybody else who comes into his life of the other religions, which were quite numerous in Palestine. Everybody wasn't Jewish and he seems to have no trouble with them. It's really scandalous. Come on, Jesus, learn your theology. You should have trouble with those people, those syrophenicians and Roman centurion, the eunuch and you go down the whole list.

Barbara Holmes: What that brings to my mind is that I've often had students when I was a professor who'd say to me, "Well yeah, all that's great. However, we know if God doesn't know, we know we're not worthy of that love, of God's love. So in order to trust that God loves us, how do you do that when you know you're a failed specimen? You've done nothing right. Everything you do, even your thoughts are not within your control." So how are we worthy of God's love so we can trust it?

Richard Rohr: Well, we've failed to do, Barbara, is communicate the unique nature of divine love. Let me say two things. Divine love is infinite. Now I'm told, you've heard me say this, the notion of infinity cannot be conceived by the human mind. We return back to adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing. Saint Torres, one of my favorite Catholic mystics, says, "God knows all the sciences except one. The only science God does not know is mathematics." And what she was trying to say was just this, once you dive into infinity, which is God, any notion of adding, subtracting, meriting, losing, being worthy, it's all a waste of time. God's love is infinite, infinite, infinite. A concept the human mind cannot form.

Barbara Holmes: That is so helpful.

Richard Rohr: It is. It is. The divine notion of perfection is not the exclusion of imperfection, but the inclusion of imperfection. That's divine love. Human love thinks you have to exclude imperfection to love a person. Now you and I are old enough to know there's just no perfect people around.

Barbara Holmes: Absolutely not.

Richard Rohr: They don't exist. And I've heard the confessions of bishops and priests and monks and they don't exist. But we've all learned to keep it hidden, our little shadow self, our little secret self. Yeah, that's the second point. Divine love includes imperfection, which is what makes it divine love. You and I, without the grace of God cannot do that. We pay attention to the imperfection. Well I saw him do that. I heard him say that. Now I've got my reason not to love. So I move myself into a smaller box where I can feel superior and damn the other person. That's what we mean when we say, "Jesus became a scapegoat" because he knew that the human pattern with scapegoating always making someone else the problem instead of yourself. Christianity is not about changing other people. It isn't. Just stop it. Stop it. It's nice if they do change. But that's God's work. It's about changing yourself and that never stops. I'm still trying to change myself.

Donald Bryant: Your podcast, Another Name for Everything, I believe in one of the episodes you talk about love as givenness, givenness. You talked about love as a concept of one way flow. And you even likened love to forgiveness. You juxtapose forgiveness and givenness. And I want you to really talk about that idea because part of our journey of healing and wholeness has to do with the ability to forgive and the ability to understand love in this concept of one way, givenness. Give us a little bit more about that from your perspective.

Richard Rohr: Paul says in one of his letters, "The yes was always found in Christ, the yes to reality." If we could, none of us can, but if we could maintain a daily yes, even though that doesn't mean you don't recognize injustice. Stand against it. But you don't let your heart become hardened and your mind become rigid in its judgements. So you're right, love is always a yes. Even though you might see little problems, you don't let it stop the yes that I find in my old age that I've eventually, and this might sound like poetry, but I've eventually had to forgive everything. Everything, everything. Me, my parents, the Catholic church, the United States of America.

And once you stop expecting it or needing it or demanding that it be perfect, you're much happier to begin with. You really are. You're doing yourself a favor, but it's still not easy to do. And apart from the life of God, the grace of God flowing through you, which is why to me the notion of God as Trinity is so important. God as flow, the flow of relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Without that flow that you have to daily say yes to, you'll get trapped in the negatives. We all do. We all will. I don't think there's any other way.

Barbara Holmes: Recently, Father Richard, you've reaffirmed the purpose of The Living School, which I think of as the throbbing heart center of the Center for Action and Contemplation. And you redefined it as a school for prophets. What does that mean? People are going to be walking around in long robes with staffs. What's going on?

Richard Rohr: Well boy, is that a worthwhile question. Neither Judaism itself nor Catholicism nor Protestantism ever really understood the deep function of a prophet. The Jews found it hard to hear the prophets. You know why? They were always criticizing Judaism. Any guys-

Barbara Holmes: That's inconvenient.

Richard Rohr: Critical of your own group you don't like. We Catholics didn't hear the prophets because we whittled down their definition as people who foretold Christ and aren't they always pointing to Christ. Well, yes, no, the exact phrases of the prophets that are foretelling Christ, I bet they're not more than 2%. So what's all the rest of that verbiage now then when Protestants came along with no good teaching from their ancestors, they got caught up in that robe thing and angry thing. And yes, truth speaking because they needed some truth speaking for them. But they never got, for the most part beyond the dualistic anger, which is how almost every prophet starts talking. He's pissed off at the injustice. Forgive the language, my mother would be mad.

The injustices, the lies of two groups. The royals, the kings and the princes and the priests. Now you can see why the Jews had a hard time hearing them. They're knocking their establishment. So we didn't recognize, and if I could live longer, I'd still love to write this, but I don't have the mind for it anymore. But I encourage people who are young like you to you go in the prophets. And you see they start with dualistic judgements like John the Baptist. That's why real upset because a marriage isn't perfect. In my opinion, that's why Jesus says no man, born of woman is greater than John the Baptist. What? But the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. He gets off to a good start. But then he stays there with dualistic judgment.

I don't think I would've joined John the Baptist church. I really don't. It was just too rigid, too angry, too absolute. And forgive me, that's why he says John had to go but he got us off to a good start. The truth speaking. Now here's my point. If you stay with each of the prophets, you'll get to these later chapters, these later verses where they talk more about infinite love. The best example OC gets toward it pretty early. Isaiah, second Isaiah already gets to love early, but Habakkuk, he waits till the last three verses. You get tired of him. You just want to close the book of Habakkuk yelling at

me, yelling at me. And he's yelled for three chapters. And so you never get to the last three verses. And where he says, "You remember. God will treat you as hinds feet on high places leaping across the mountaintops in the middle of grace and forgiveness."

That's a paraphrase. You have to read the whole tirade. Now Protestants got lost in the tirade because they didn't have a strong mystical tradition except with people like Howard Thurman and Harriett Tubman. Yes, she's a prophet, but she ends up not an angry woman, but a loving woman doing the works of love and service. Same with Howard Thurman. You've got to read the entire book of each prophet and recognize he or she does not stay in the dualistic anger. No man born a woman is greater than John the Baptist. But the least in the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is universal love is greater than John. Jesus said that, his cousin, the least in the kingdom of God is greater than my cousin John the Baptist because he got trapped in anger. And this is important today for those of us of a liberal progressive persuasion because I'm meeting far too many who are angry people, who are cynical people and they belong to the church of John the Baptist, not the church of Jesus.

Barbara Holmes: Very profound, very profound.

Richard Rohr: It took me much of my life to figure that out. But once you see it's obvious.

Barbara Holmes: Father Richard, talk to me about gazing.

Richard Rohr: Oh you ask such good questions.

Barbara Holmes: I'm a doer. On the Enneagram, I'm a three with a four wing. I want it to be a nine, but I'm a three with a four wing.

Richard Rohr: Oh, but see you're connected to the nine, three, nine, six, and your six is your loyalty to the tradition, to the scriptures. Yeah.

Barbara Holmes: I'm kind of a doer. I'm action most of the time except when I'm making myself center and contemplate. When I first heard you describe gazing, I wondered how do you get into that portal. But the more you talked about it, the more I understood that awe is the highest form of prayer. Talk to our listeners about this thing called gazing.

Richard Rohr: No, I don't know if it's my old age. I don't know if it's my sickness. I'm carrying a number of sicknesses. But in the last, I'd say two years, it started here in my backyard. I've got four huge cottonwood trees. And on summer days, there's a chair underneath one of them that I put there, and I just go sit there and I don't read theology anymore. I spent too many years doing that. I mean I loved it. It allowed me to become a teacher I guess. But I just found myself looking at the trees, at the leaves, at the grass, at the lizards. I'm in New Mexico. So we have a lot of cute little lizards. My dog Opie doesn't like them, but they're really rather cute. And just seeing things in their isness, their being. Why that lizard now, here, for me, I guess. I bet no human eye will ever notice that little lizard. And then I start being very grateful for it.

I don't have to think anymore. In fact, thinking gets in the way. And that was the disadvantage of being a preacher most of my life. And I'm sure you've had to face this,

that your prayer becomes prep time for your sermons.

Barbara Holmes: Yes.

Richard Rohr: You can't help it. You just can't help it. God understands. But I don't preach anymore. Well I guess I am now, but not very much. I don't preach in the church here. And so I don't have to formulate ideas. I just gaze. What's happened in the last six months is I sort of come to when I've been gazing for a while, not thinking. And I noticed one day... Now I'm going to do it and it's going to look real stupid. But my mouth was like this and I only knew it. I couldn't feel it. But when I stuck my finger in... Why's your mouth open, Richard?

Now it's all the time. That after I gaze, I don't know at what point I switch from the gaze to the open mouth. But it's almost every time I pray. And to the students last month when you were there, Barbara, I called it being gobsnacked. Is that a word? I don't-

Barbara Holmes: Yes.

Richard Rohr: It came to me right there. My prayer ends by being gobsnacked. And it's not like I'm seeing an apparition of Jesus or knowing any great truth, but it's just, I don't need to know anymore. This is more than enough. Just stay right here Richard. And so I shut my mouth and Opie and I come back to my house here and I know I've prayed, but it took my whole life to get there. It isn't saying prayers. It isn't thinking prayers. It's finally being a prayer where my cells seem to be praying. And please don't think I'm extraordinary. That was the meaning of the gift of tongues. That everybody could join in.

Barbara Holmes: We can all gaze.

Richard Rohr: Well. Yeah.

Barbara Holmes: How wonderful.

Richard Rohr: It wasn't just the holy people or the worthy people or the sinless people because there aren't any.

Barbara Holmes: We are coming up on an hour and this has been such a rich experience. I want to tell you something about how you've affected my life and then I'm going to let Donny wrap us up. You have deeply affected me, my prayer life, everything because what you did was you helped me to ease all the disconnects between spirit and mind that I readily adopted in academia.

Richard Rohr: Oh yeah. Academia does that.

Barbara Holmes: Yes. Oh my goodness. And I loved it. I loved [inaudible 00:51:51].

Richard Rohr: I did too. I'm grateful for my education.

Barbara Holmes: Yeah. But spiritually there was no wholeness. There was no way to bring those pieces

together. And I've really found through your work and through enhancing my contemplative life, that I am a more whole person. Not whole yet, but at least on the path toward a more united being, a more whole being. Thank you for allowing me to share my meager offerings within your community of the Center of Action and Contemplation.

Richard Rohr: It's our privilege to have you and we have to get you here Donny, someday.

Donald Bryant: I'll be on the first plane down to Albuquerque. So.

Richard Rohr: Well God bless you both. Thank you.

Donald Bryant: God bless you. God bless. This has been such a great hour of conversation, discussion, reflection. And I would have to say transformation.

Richard Rohr: Thanks to you two.

Barbara Holmes: Thank you.

Richard Rohr: I need good people to bring good ideas out of mind, mouth ever talking. Thank you.

Donald Bryant: Thank you.

Barbara Holmes: Thank you.

Donald Bryant: Thank you for listening to this episode. We'd like to leave you with a few reflections on our conversation with Father Richard Rohr.

Barbara Holmes: What I loved about the conversation was his honest talk about love. That word is thrown around so much. And he basically was just saying it's not just supposed to be an aspirational ideal. It's supposed to be embodied. It's supposed to stand up for the least and speak truth to power. I mean that's a whole different concept of love.

Donald Bryant: It is. To even take it further. One of the pieces that really stuck out to me to in connection with his re-imagining of love was the conversation that we had about certitude and faith. And it is a function of love when you really look at it from that perspective. But he defined the opposite of faith is not doubt, but the opposite of faith is certitude as he stated. And I do think that understanding it from that perspective, Dr. B really helps us to redefine faith as you indicated with love. I mean a lot of Father Richard Rohr's work really is about re-imagining, helping us to really look through a different lens. And I really appreciate the conversation. Very insightful if you will.

Barbara Holmes: Yeah, it was wonderful for me to finally get an insight and something I had been wondering about. And that was how the Franciscans were so comfortable with minority issues and standing up for minorities and for him to talk about the fact that they understand that the mainstream isn't main at all, it's just dominant. And that phrase that he used. Wow. When you can't see Christ in others, you can't see Christ in yourself. That kind of sums it all up, doesn't it?

Donald Bryant: It does. It does. It does. And even as he defined the concept of Christ as the archetype,

as the blueprint for everything. The universal blueprint. And I love that. I mean it does speak to that. If you can't see that blueprint in others, how can you see that blueprint in yourself?

Barbara Holmes: Well we certainly have our work cut out because that means that we have to see Christ in Putin. We have to see Christ in those people we consider to be our enemies and our oppositions. This loving thing looks like it's going to be a full-time job.

Donald Bryant: It does. It does. I think that what really summarized this idea of full-time is as he ended the conversation about his time at his home, sitting outside in his chair, gazing, if you will, at nature, gazing at his surroundings. And he happened to discover that his mouth was just open in the form of awe as if he was finally comprehending and experiencing the true universal awesomeness of the oneness of all creation. And his body just responded in awe. And him articulating that at this season of his life really was inspiring, was very insightful because it gives us insight to what may be to come and what maturity could potentially look like. Right. As we begin to experience that awesomeness, that oneness and the amazement of what the creator's really doing all around us.

Barbara Holmes: You really can't leap from where we are right now to this expansive idea of love. But you know what we can do? We can do what Father Richard does. We can go into nature, we can sit and we can gaze. We can allow this Christ soaked world to infuse us and to awaken us to something within that will also awaken that love. Great conversation, Donny.

Donald Bryant: So to our listeners, I ask you how can you find the Christ in the community that you are connected to? How can you see the Christ and the relationships or the surroundings that are around you?