

# The Way of Love



READINGS FOR  
A MEANINGFUL LIFE

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## Introduction

Everyone has a philosophy of life. For Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando) in the 1954 movie *On the Waterfront*, it was “Do it to him before he does it to you.” Terry falls in love with a convent girl, Edie (Eva Marie Saint), who asks him, “Shouldn’t everybody care about everybody else?” He calls her a fruitcake.

“I mean,” says Edie, “isn’t everybody *a part* of everybody else?” This is her philosophy of life.

Later Terry crosses paths with Fr. Barry (Karl Malden), whose parish is the rough waterfront of New Jersey, and he too has a philosophy of life. When the mob murders a longshoreman, Fr. Barry stands over the corpse in the hole and preaches to the other longshoremen, one of whom says he should go back to his church:

“Boys, this is my church! And if you don’t think Christ is down here on the waterfront, you’ve got another think coming! Every morning when the hiring boss blows his whistle, Jesus stands alongside you in the shape-up. He sees why some of you get picked and some of you get passed over. He sees the family men worrying about getting the rent

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and getting food in the house for the wife and the kids. . . . Every fellow down here is your brother in Christ! . . . He's kneeling right here beside Dugan. And he's saying with all of you, if you do it to the least of mine, you do it to me!"

The words pierce Terry Malloy's heart like the spear that ran through Jesus's side. He starts to see what Edie sees: we are part of one another. His conscience stirs. "Conscience," he complains to Fr. Barry later, "that stuff can drive you nuts!" It drives him instead into Edie's arms and to a new philosophy of life. At the end of the movie Terry carries his hook over his shoulder like a cross and stands up for love, for God, for Edie, and for his neighbors.

*On the Waterfront.* What a great movie! If you watch it you don't have to read this book.

It's OK if you do both though.

Our point is, everyone has a philosophy of life. And, like love, as the Andrew Lloyd Weber song goes, "It changes everything, how we live and how we die."

Our philosophy in *The Way of Love* is much like Edie's and Fr. Barry's and later Terry's, expressed in a multitude of ways by more than a hundred writers. You can read it from beginning to end or in chunks if you wish and, we hope, find something new or something you forgot that will give you a bit of inspiration or encouragement or assurance. Just as good, you can pick it up every now and then and turn to any old page and, we hope, find something that will help make your day.

## Introduction

The book is divided into three parts, each with a basic theme. The theme is like a hub in a bicycle wheel with enough spokes spreading out to keep you moving forward into practical and sometimes surprising places.

Part One, “Love,” does what most books on the subject don’t do. It gives a definition of love. Most books describe love, and make distinctions like *eros* and *agape*, without ever saying in a simple sentence what love is. We like the definition given by Dr. Thomas Hora, a psychiatrist and spiritual teacher: “Love, which comes from God, is the love of being loving. When we fall in love with the love of being loving—*unconditional spiritual benevolence*—Love, or God, reveals itself through us and all things work together for good.”

Part Two then is “Love of God.” Its basic premise is that God is the only love there is. We love because God loves us first. God is not a person outside us but Love and Wisdom within us and all around us. God is all powerful, everywhere active Good. To love loving what is good and beautiful and merciful is to love God. When we are filled with unconditional benevolence we overflow with God.

Part Three, “Love of Neighbor,” is about that overflow. It helps us know what Edie knew—everybody is a part of everybody—and what Fr. Barry preached—we are all manifestations of one God, so what we do to our neighbor we do to the Christ in ourselves. Just as a wave can never be separated from the sea or from the other waves, we can never be separated from Christ or from one another. The wave is in the ocean, and the ocean is in the wave. We are

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in God, and God is in us. This is the basis for loving our neighbor as ourself. The implications are mind-boggling.

*The Way of Love* is the sixth book in a series that includes *The Way of Kindness*, *The Way of Gratitude*, *The Way of Forgiveness*, *The Way of Suffering*, and *The Way of Peace*. Just as we have endeavored to make the three parts of this book, and all the entries in each part, lead one into another, we have tried to make each book in the series an integral aspect of all the other books. Our philosophy is not only that everybody is a part of everybody else, but that everything is a part of everything. Everything on the waterfront is *one*.

With all our love,

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