

Fiona Gardner
The Four Steps of Love
Inspiration and Guidance
for the Spiritual Path
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For those who are familiar with the pattern of St Bernard's Four Steps of Love or would like to become more so, the title of Fiona Gardner's book will be an attraction; but prior knowledge is not a necessary preliminary. This author uses her training in psychotherapy together with an understanding of the movements required for spiritual growth to produce a framework for the journey to God.

Gardner begins by suggesting that, though our paths are different, we all need some understanding of the likely pitfalls, and she offers four aspects of a process to assist the journey: namely, a frame of reference or structure, inspiration for response and development, some connections with the experiences of others, and reflection on our own experience.

By attention to these, listening for outer voices and awareness of our inner ones, we may expect to hear the Word of God and to be acted upon by God. "When you turn to the right hand or to the left, your ears will hear a word behind you. 'This is the way, walk in it'" (Is 30:21).

She then explores each of St Bernard's 'Steps' in turn, followed by a question from Jesus which she finds appropriate, completing the section with practical exercise. So, with the first 'Step', love of self for self, we have, "What are you looking for?" The second 'Step' has, "But who do you say I am?"; the third, "Do you know what I have done to you?" and the fourth, "For whom are you looking?".

Gardner warns her readers early on that we cannot measure where we are, but should rather consider only the deepening of our relationship with God. This book is a valuable guide along the spiritual journey.

Elizabeth CSF