

A NATURE PRAYER METHOD

God Revealing Himself Through Nature

*Taken from the book "You Can Pray" of P. Ribes, s.j.
published by the Gujarat Sahitya Prakash.*

Note:

- ✓ *Prayers of nature quite often trigger deep and delicate feelings in those who practice them. They may easily open the door for people into a more contemplative way of praying.*
- ✓ *In particular, the expected gains of this prayer exercise are:*
 - *To know God' attributes and qualities through nature.*
 - *To open our minds and hearts to what creation reveals us about the greatness and goodness of God.*
 - *To feel God's ever abiding presence within us and in the world around.*
 - *A sense of "oneness" and "wholeness" with God's creation.*
- ✓ *For this exercise, beautiful and attractive natural surroundings are required. If not available, you may take recourse to fantasy. Imagine you are there.*
- ✓ *The prayer nature method here below, can be used both for personal prayer, as well as for directing prayer groups*

Structure of this Exercise:

This exercise is a contemplative meditation of nature. It has three parts:

1st part: Doctrinal: reflection on Romans 1/18-25

2nd part: Verification of Paul's teachings through personal experience.

3rd part: Personal Prayer.

Procedure

- Before you begin your prayer, decide the length of time you intend spending in the exercise. (*Say 20 to 30 minutes for a start*) You may increase the length of time in future exercises.
- Do not be in a hurry. Keep you watch out of sight. No rush, no haste!
- Quiet down. Relaxation and/or awareness exercises may help.
- Strive to create in you a listening attitude; an openness to God and to nature.
- Invoke the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

1st Part.

Personal Bible Study-cum-reflection.

God Reveals Himself through Nature . St. Paul's Teaching

- Read Romans 1:18-25. (*If possible distribute Xerox copies of the text*)

- Reflect to on these points (*Ideally, write down your reflections*)
 - What does Paul teach us in this passage?
 - How does God reveal himself through nature?
 - To whom does he reveal or show himself?
 - Who are those who come to now God and those who do not?
 - Have you ever experience God's presence in his creation, in nature?
 - When? How? What did you learn?

2nd Part.

Verify Paul's teachings through your own experience:

(If natural surroundings, are not available, use your fantasy. Imagine that you are in a beautiful natural spot)

- Go out by yourself. Mill around. Keep gazing at nature.
- Allow yourself; force yourself, to be immersed in nature. Listen...touch...feel
- Look at the different items of nature around you and ask yourself what each one of them tells you of God's qualities and goodness.. For instance: **What do the skies....the sun...the mountains....the birds...the trees...the flowers...etc, tell you about God's power, love, beauty, providence, knowledge, greatness, etc?**
(Put your reflections in writing)

3rd Part

Personal Prayer

- In love and in wonder, speak with God who reveals Himself, who tells you so many wonderful things about himself.
- **Thank him, Praise him, and Worship Him.**
- Pray in words, in song, in gestures, in postures, verbally and not verbally....
- Finally **write down** your reflections and prayers.
- Prayerfully, keep reading the reflections and prayers you wrote till you feel satisfied.
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(Don't destroy what you wrote. It may prove very enlightening later on)

Closure:

- Recite 'The Our Father' and 'The Glory Be'.
- Sing a Hymn or hymns about the Greatness of God and his creation