

PRAYER EXERCISE

Hand Prints V/S Heart Prints

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

Remarks:

- ✓ *Basically this exercise is based on our reminiscences of life. We try to remember as vividly as we can; "our hands", "others' hands", "Jesus' hands".*
- ✓ *This exercise is intended to help us to grow in the love of God, in the love of others and in the love of self.*
- ✓ *This prayer method will help you to indulge in different modes of prayer such as; thanksgiving, praise, petition and intercession.*
- ✓ *It is an easy method that can be used practically any time, anywhere.*
- ✓ *You need not go through the entire exercise in one sitting. Take it by parts.*

This Exercise has Three Parts.

1st. Part: Your Beloved People's Hands.

2rd Part: Your Hands.

3th Part: Jesus's Hands.

Preparation

- Close your eyes. Relax. Relaxation and/or breathing exercises may help.
- Invoke the Holy Spirit for assistance.
- Keep your hands resting on your lap, palms up.
- Become aware of your hands and palms.
For a while, experience the fullness and strength of your hands, rub them, clasp them, open your fists twice or thrice.
- Feel your hands sensations.

First Part;

YOUR BELOVED PEOPLE'S HANDS.

- Read slowly and attentively the lines below, one line at time.
- Visualize, imagine that you see what you read . (Take your time),

After reading one line close your eyes and thank God for the people mentioned.

- Your father's and mother's hands.
- Your spouse's hands.
- Your children's hands.

- Think of the hands of your newborn child.
- Your brother's or sister's hands
- The hands of those who raised you up.
- Relish the mysterious touch of the hands of those who loved you.
- Remember the rough and wrinkled hands of your old folks.
- Think of the hands of the doctors and nurses that made you well.
- Think of the simple hands of servants of your childhood days.
- Remember the hands of your teachers from nursery days on.
- The hands that baptized you, that forgave you your sins that have given you Jesus from your First Communion till to day.

And the many other unforgettable hands you remember ; hands – you only know - that made you the wonder you are.

Second Part:

YOUR OWN HANDS

- Read slowly and attentively the lines below, one line at time..
- Visualize, imagine that you see what you read. *(Take your time)*

After reading one line, close your eyes and thank God for your hands.

- Think of your hands of your childhood days, so innocent beautiful and delicate.
- Remember what your hands have done for you, during your tender days.
- Crawling, and creeping.
- Balancing and attempting to stand on your feet.
- Learning to hold things on your own. .
- Washing and bathing and dressing yourself
- Playing games.
- Joining them first in prayer.
- Writing your name and doing your lessons.
- The tiredness and aching they have known,
- The cold and the heat, the soreness and the bruises they experienced.....
- Remember the tears they have wiped away, yours and others' ...
- The blood they have bled.
- When countless times with them you signed yourself with the sign of the Cross.
- The times you raised them in prayer and supplication to God.
- The jobs, duties and responsibilities you performed n your life.
- Your friendly handshakes and loving hugs.
- Opening them in welcome and waving them in sign of “Goodbye”
- The countless deeds of kindness you did to others with them.

And many other wonderful things you remember you did with your hands.

Third Part:

JESUS' HANDS.

- Read slowly and attentively the lines below, one line at time.
- Visualize, imagine that you see what you read. Then close your eyes.*(Take your time)*

After reading one line, close your eyes and thank God for Jesus' hands.

- Hands that were nailed to a cross for you and me.
- Hands that set us free from sin and guilt.
- Hands that dispelled the darkness and coldness of our minds and hearts.
- Hands from which flowed pardon, peace and hope for all.
- Hands that opened our minds to the truth, and our hearts to love.
- Hands that restored us to health and wholeness.
- Hands that raised the dead to life.
- Hands that nourish the hungry.
- Glorious hands they were, yet they washed the disciples' feet.
- Victorious hands wide open in the cross as a sign of everlasting love.
- Inviting hands welcoming us to our Father's home.

CLOSING PRAYER.

Thank Your Heavenly father:

- For the countless people's hands that served you through life
- For your hands and all the good deeds you performed with them.
- For the redeeming and saving hands of Christ.

Ask God for help:

- To use your hands to serve and praise Him.
- And serve your brothers and sisters.

End by reciting :

- The Our Father" and "The Glory Be"
- Recite or sing an appropriate hymn like "Of My Hands I give to you. "

EPILOGUE:

Hand Prints and Heart Prints

A Thought.

- Our hands are not only meant for ourselves, but also for the good of others.
- There is so much tenderness and service we may offer others with our hands.

Symbolic Exercises:

- 1st. Raise your hands upwards and pray to God for you and others.
- 2nd. Place your hands on your chest. Sense the beat of your heart, a heart made only to love God and others.

A Fantasy:

- Now, in fantasy, hold your heart in your hands.
- For a while, feel its warmth, its throbbing, its urge to love, its desire to give itself to others.
- Make your mind always to carry your heart in your hands.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Every time you stretch your hands to others in service , give your heart not your bare hands.
2. Any service done in love to others, in truth, is done with your heart, not with youra hands!
3. Hand prints can easily be erased Heart prints can never be.
4. Our heart's memory should never die! Gratitude is the memory of the heart

TWO QUESTIONS TO REMEMBER.

1. *How many people bear your heart prints?*
2. *How many heart-prints do you carry in your heart?*