

A NATURE PRAYER METHOD

Hearing God in the Sounds of Nature

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

Remarks

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ This prayer nature method can be used both for personal prayer, as well as for directing prayer groups
- ✓ Gains accruing from this exercise:
 - To perceive and enjoy the calmness and peace of nature.
 - To hear, listen and enjoy through the sounds of nature, the voice of God - **the symphony of God's creation** -
- ✓ This exercise is sort of a passive-contemplation. We are not supposed to think or to reflect, but just peacefully listen to nature sounding and resounding.
- ✓ In the very listening of nature's sounds, we listen to God present in it.

Requirements

For this exercise a beautiful and peaceful natural setting is required, away from mechanical and "civilized" noises.

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

Find your spot. Sit down in silence,

- Go out alone by yourself around that lovely natural setting. ..Look for a place where you can be comfortably seated...
- Sit down and keep looking around at nature, gazing at it.
- Gently close your eyes and, for a while, remain in complete silence

Open wide your Ears. Keep your eyes shut. Listen to Nature's Song.

- Listen to all possible sounds of nature around you. The chirping of birds, the buzzing of insects, the purling of water, the rustle of leaves on the trees, etc.
- Strive to perceive the farthest sounds, the faintest murmurs of nature.
- For few minutes do not think or reason, just listen and listen
- Be aware of your feelings... What and how do you feel?
- Enjoy this sounding and resounding nature, bubbling, throbbing with life.
- **It is nature's unconscious, yet unbroken symphony of thanks and praise to God her creator.**
- You are part of this creation. You, too, have to join in this symphony of thanks and praises to God.
- Join nature's symphony by praising and thanking God in sound: **Hum, sing, shout, whistle, clap your hands, sigh to God!**

Listen to God:

- Again for a while, keep listening to nature's symphony. .
- In the midst of this sounding nature, listen to the voice of God. Feel His presence.
- It is God who actively sustains into being this nature and its sounding symphony.
- Perceive the peace, the calmness, the tranquility and the greatness of God revealing Himself to us through his creation. It's God's peace and serenity.
- Enjoy it. Relish it. Sink deeper and deeper into it.
- Open your mind and heart and your entire being to God.

Closure:

- Open your eyes. Look at nature, listen to it with new eyes, new ears and a new heart
- Non-verbally, in sound, in gestures and postures praise God with nature.
- Join in now in a conscious way in this symphony and make it a canticle of praise the Creator. Pray spontaneously.
- Write a prayer of praise and thanks to God. (*Keep it for later use*).
- Recite "The Our Farther" and 'The Glory Be'
- Sing an appropriate Hymn like "Great, indeed, are your Works, oh Lord."