

A NATURE PRAYER METHOD

IMPERSONATING TENDER OBJECTS OF 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.*
- ✓ *For this prayer exercise, some natural beautiful surroundings, like a garden, a forest, the country side, etc, are a must. There should be an abundance of fine and tender objects of nature all around, like trees, flowers, insects, birds, fish, etc...*
- ✓ *This prayer nature method here below, can be used both for personal prayer, as well as for directing prayer groups*
- ✓ *This exercise is based on fantasy. We ask the participants to impersonate delicate and tender objects of nature.*
- ✓ *Children and youngsters enjoy this exercise most.*
- ✓ *The expected gains from this Exercise:*
 - *Growth in tender and delicate feelings towards God and creation.*
 - *Growing in love toward created things especially towards the weak and needy.*
 - *A sense of "oneness" and "wholeness" with God's creation.*
 - *Deep peace, joy and delicacy of feelings.*

Procedure:

Find Your Place and Your Object

- Go out alone by yourself, mill around, look at nature, stare at it, and listen to it. Find an inviting place where to sit or lie down.
- Focus your attention on a small and delicate object of nature that attracts your attention. v.g. A flower, a tender leaf, a butterfly, a twig, etc.
- If possible, hold it in your hands, touch it. Observe it, concentrate on it.

Fantasy: Impersonation

- Fantasize; imagine that you become the object of your choice. .Get inside that thing. Yes, become the flower or the bird or the fish, the twig, whatever thing you have chosen...
- Try to feel what that thing would, were it a human being. How it feels being a little flower, a fish, a bird or something else.
- Now, being the thing you chose, tell God how you feel, tell Him your longings, your needs, your fears, your anxieties, your regrets.

- Try to feel what it would mean to fall into the hands of insensitive and cruel people, to be used, to be .encaged, to be sold, tortured, ill treated, and even killed!

Reflect

(Put your reflections in writing)

- Still being that tender thing you – in fantasy - have become, tell people the way would like to be treated, handled and cared for.....
- Still being what you – in fantasy - are, say or write a prayer to God telling Him what you feel, what you wish and, especially, in what way you want to be respected and treated by people.

Personal Examination.

(Write down your thoughts and resolutions)

You and Nature.

- How do you treat nature, God's beautiful creation?
- How much do you care for flowers, trees, animals, birds, pets, etc?
- Are you interested in ecological issues?
- Make your mind and promise God and to yourself to treat nature with love and tenderness.

You and Your Neighbors.

- How delicate, affectionate and tender are you towards people.
- Do you show special tenderness and concern for children, the old, and the sick the suffering, the weak, the handicap?
- Are you sensitive and sympathetic towards the poor, to the down-trodden, the jobless, the failures, the dropouts, the deviants, addicts, prostitutes and their likes?
- How do you treat your family members, brothers and sisters specially your grandparents, your servants, etc?
- In what way you can become more tender kind and understanding?

Closing Prayer.

Alone and in silence before God and his creation,

- Praise and thank God for all his creatures and what they mean to us.
- Ask him for the grace to ever respect his creation, especially the tender and beautiful objects of nature and always treat them lovingly and with care.
- Ask God for the grace ever to respect the weak, the feeble, the old, the sick the infirm, the poor, the illiterate, the children, the down-trodden, the outcast and those in greater need..
- Close by saying “The Our Father” and ‘The Glory Be’ and with sing a Hymn