

A NATURE PRAYER METHOD

TOUCHING GOD IN 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.

The outcome of any Nature Prayer will likely be:

- ✓ *Deep peace, joy and delicacy of feelings.*
- ✓ *A growth in love for nature.*
- ✓ *An awareness that prayer does not consist only in thinking, but even more, in affections and feelings.*
- ✓ *A sense of "oneness" and "wholeness" with God's creation.*

Remarks:

- ✓ For this exercise a pleasant and beautiful natural setting is necessary.
- ✓ This prayer method is an attempt to sense God's very life throbbing in nature.
- ✓ In this exercise we try to experience the mystery of **God's sustaining presence** in all living creatures. "In him, we, live, move and are.
- ✓ This prayer nature exercise can be used both for personal prayer, as well as for directing prayer groups

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 an Item of Nature that has Life.

- Go out to the open, mill around for a while; keep looking at the objects of nature, flowers, leaves, grass, fruits, birds, pets, etc.
- Pick up a thing that attracts you most, something beautiful and pleasant. **Something that has life in it**, a leave, a flower, an insect, a little bird, a small pet, etc.
- Tenderly, hold in your hands.
- Next, sit or lie down on the grass holding your object close to you.
- Keep your eyes closed for the rest of the exercise.

Awaken your Sense of Touch

- Keeping the thing of your choice in your hands, start feeling it. Touch it carefully and attentively.
- Sense its qualities, its texture, shape, softness, dryness, moisture, warmth, size, weight. Just keep feeling it.

Sensing God in that Object` (*Spent time in this step. No hurry*)

- Enjoy its touch. Caress it. Kiss it.
- God is dwelling in it. God sustains it. God keeps it in existence. God lives in it!
- Now, imagine that you caress God in it. Yes, kiss God in it. Press it against your chest, against your cheek, against your heart. Feel its touch. Allow its touch to touch you. Enjoy its touch...
- It is God touching you. Feel His tenderness. His delicacy. His warmth. His love. Feel close to God. Yes, God lives in it and sustains it in existence.
- Yes, in the thing you hold, verily, you hold God and God touches you

Reflections: Feel One with Nature, feel one with God! (*No haste!*)

- You, and the object you hold tight close to you, have something in common; yes, an existence given to both of you by God.
- A life, an existence and a being, you share with all created things! All of us are God's creatures. In a way, we are brothers and sisters. God is our common Maker, our common Father....
- Everything that is, springs from the same source of being. We all come from God.
- In a mysterious, yet in a true sense: **We all are one in God and God is one in us!**

Prayerful Closure - Celebrating Life

Lovingly, from your heart write your own prayers of praise and thanksgiving

- Break forth in a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God for the gift of life, for the gift of existence.
- Thank God for your life, for the lives of your brothers and sisters.
- For the very existence of all creatures; for the Sun, the Moon, the trees, the flowers, the birds, the fish and all living things!
- Now, open your eyes wide! ...Look at the world with new eyes! Contemplate it with wonder, with awe and gratitude.
- Find and sense God in nature as well within you.

With joy read and pray with the Canticle of st. Francis of Assisi

CANTICLE OF THE SUN.

Omnipotent, exalted and most loving God!
Yours are all praise, glory and honor!
Only you are worthy of all blessings!
And no man on earth is worthy even to
Utter your glorious name!

I praise you, my God, loud and long for my brother Sun!
Who wakens to life and illumines all things, and heralds the day!
Beautiful in his radiance, riding majestically
over the blue vault of the sky!
He reveals to us “You”, his glorious Maker!

I praise you, Lord, for my sisters the Moon and the Stars,
so brightly fashioned by your powerful love!
So chaste, so charming, so alive!

I praise you Lord, for the wonderful breeze!
Sometimes gentle, sometimes rough, but always
at everybody’s service, for ever refreshing
all creatures, great and small!

For my sister Water, I praise you, Lord!
so precious and life-giving,
so pliant, chaste and humble!

And for my brother Fire, I praise you, Lord!
He lights my way when the sun plunges me in darkness,
He warms me against the biting cold,
So strong, so joyous, so enduring!

And for my sister the Earth, who offers us all
at all times and seasons plenty of luscious fruits
and colorful flowers, I praise you, Lord!

I praise you too, for those who forgive me and
love me to the very end without counting the cost!

And for those who know how to suffer in peace and love,
I thank you Lord! You will give them in due time
your abundant consolation!

And for my sister Death, be you blessed and praised,
my Lord and God! No one can escape her embrace.
Woe to those who die away from you, my God!
Blessed be those who die in the embrace of your love!

Blessed are those who do your will, my God!
Death will have no power over them; they will always
enjoy eternal life!

**And you all creatures of God,
serve the Lord with tenderness
and humble heart! Praise the Lord!**

