

Fr. Rob Kroll, S.J.

Praying with Creation: A Walk of Thanksgiving and Praise

“Reflect how God dwells in creatures: in elements giving them existence, in the plants giving them life, in the animals conferring upon them sensation, in human beings bestowing understanding.”
(Spiritual Exercises 235)

This exercise is meant to deepen our awareness of God’s presence, activity and goodness revealed in creation.

PREPARATION

Begin your prayer as you would any prayer period, alerting yourself to God’s presence within and around you, you who are a “temple of the Holy Spirit.”

Ask God for this particular grace: **for deep wonder and awe at creation as well as for a heartfelt knowledge and experience of God’s unconditional love for me.**

As you step outdoors, breathe the fresh air deeply. How rarely we become aware of it as the sustainer of life day and night, the unceasing Providence of God whose love holds us in existence and continually creates you!

CONTEMPLATING CREATION

Now take a walk or simply sit somewhere and look. Notice the various aspects of creation: sky, sun, clouds, trees, plants, grass, rock, animals, water...whatever presents itself before me....

Let yourself be attracted eventually by one created reality: a tree, a flower, an animal, the sky, the wind, a stone...spending time absorbed by it, observing it in detail...use your sense of sight and hearing....if possible, touch it, listen to it, smell it...

Ask God to reveal something through the created thing...about creation itself...about Himself...about you....

Ponder these words:

† Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things. Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God. Every creature is a word of God. If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature, even a caterpillar, I would never have to prepare a sermon. So full of God is every creature.

Meister Eckhart (1260-1327)

(Over)

† Praise the Lord from the heavens...

Praise him, sun and moon,
Praise him, all you shining stars!
Praise him, you highest heavens,
And you waters above the heavens!

Praise the Lord from the earth,
You sea monsters and all deeps,
Fire and hail, snow and frost,
Stormy winds fulfilling his command!

Mountains and all hills,
Fruit trees and all cedars!
Beasts and all cattle,
Creeping things and flying birds!

Let them praise the name of the Lord,
For his name alone is exalted;
His glory is above earth and heaven.

Psalms 148:1, 3-4, 7-10, 13

DIALOGUE WITH THE TRINITY

Express to God directly whatever fills your heart...wonder at the awesomeness of creation...gratitude for the beauty and love revealed through creation...awe at the mystery of life, of God, of myself....

REVIEW OF PRAYER

End your prayer with an Our Father, Hail Mary or some other formal prayer.

After your prayer is finished, record in writing what happened during this prayer experience. You might answer questions such as

- † *What aspect of creation attracted me the most and why?*
- † *Why insights have been given to me about creation, God or myself?*
- † *How did I feel during this prayer, that is, which affective movements stirred my heart?*
- † *Do I feel God inviting me to do anything as a result of this prayer?*