

DISCOVERIES IN PRAYER

Drawn to
Gaze at – Listen
Discover – Thank
Ask – Share

PART ONE
(Second Edition)

Malachy Hanratty SSC

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EXPLANATION TO BOOKLETS, Parts 1 and 2 of 'Discoveries In Prayer'

These two booklets are copied from my book, '*Discoveries in Prayer*' published in 2007. (Booklets are easier to carry around and helpful for certain prayer-times. Hopefully they also will be on the web at (www.columbans.ie/spirituality) That book was a summary of talks given about praying and drawing hearers to discover new experiences in prayer. It also encouraged hearers to share experiences with one another leading to receiving deeper fruit. It stays with the basic movement of the '*human person*' being drawn to the Loving, Creating and Saving Being outside ourselves. Here it does not go on to specific Revelation, but is a good help for that 'journey'.



The first booklet, Part 1, will contain the general Introduction and the first seven chapters of the original book. Here is a brief description of the contents of each part (for the possessor of only one part). Part 1 develops a greater awareness of, and a growing relationship with, God in our ordinary daily lives. In our habit of special Prayer-time we are led from talking to the God we have heard about to discovering and meeting our God in events of our daily lives. We are helped to wait in

openness to notice 'God at work' in those events. In prayer-time we can, eg. meet God in 'events of our History'. Also Meeting God in Nature can become so fruitful. Discovering more *positive* things leads to a more thankful relationship to God. I am on the way to accepting that I – and everyone – is *important* to God! For times of need or sufferings or even protesting, we are able to go back to *the God we met before*' and begin our talk about it to 'our own God', waiting in trust.



Part 2. will cover Chapters 8 to 15. No 8 will focus on 'petition' and, through it, growing closer to God and also growing closer to others. I am now better able to talk to 'my own God.' But I must remain alert to how I am *talking to God* about my want and not just 'talking to myself about the want' or talking to the 'Want'. Also I must grow in awareness that only God can help, but it will be in His way and time! But perseverance in asking gives greater closeness and trust. No 9 is a concrete experience of Meeting God in a Painful Experience. From it I learned so much; I began to notice change in myself, happening both from the experience and by much reflection on it. In No 10 we see more how deepening the prayer of Petition can lead to fruitful self-knowledge. The book continues helping with Relationships, Forgiveness, Spiritual Sharing, and the potential of such, small or large, groups to influence Communities.

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INTRODUCTION

Did you ever think, ‘I would like to be able to pray better?’ Maybe this book will help.

Describing prayer as talking to God would satisfy most people. However, if I were to add to the definition ‘... and hearing God talking to me’, I could expect many puzzled, or doubting, glances. Yet, ‘hearing’ God is a deep, and very important, part of our praying. One aim of this book is to help develop this habit of listening.

The book is a summary of material that I gave, in many sessions, to various groups, over sixteen years. Each session consisted of a talk, a period of silent prayer, reflection on that prayer and sharing about it in small groups. These talks were allied to practising the contents in a step-by-step programme of about eighteen sessions. A printed summary of each talk was handed out after each session. This book is based on them.

All this took place in Japan, where I have worked for over forty years in different parishes. Before I left, with the help of many participants I rushed to put the programme into book form. I wanted this, primarily, to help former participants start this programme for new groups in their own or other churches. Secondly, I wanted it as a help for participants continuing in groups that were carrying on without me. Lastly, I thought it might help the individual who picked up

the book and wanted to experiment with the contents. I could imagine it being used as a do-it-yourself instruction manual.

But the bias of this material towards group use remains. I believe practising its suggestions in some kind of companionship with another or others has an added value.

It has since been suggested that I publish the talks in English.

I called the programme 'Praying-as-a-Human' in order to emphasise the place of the human faculties in opening us up to God's action as well as aiming at as wide an audience as possible. Thus I don't advance into Scripture or Liturgy. However, I consider the basic elements of prayer which are presented in this course, to be a very important foundation for all kinds of prayer. Indeed, I made it a required preparation for subsequent courses of 'Praying Scripture' or Liturgical Prayer.

I would like to think that anyone could find this programme helpful. The majority of the participants with whom I developed it were women with their families reared. Most of them had been baptised as adults, some others were not Catholic and still others were not baptised. Yet, out of this 'unexpected line up', some are now leading prayer-groups and some are even doing this with their fairly recently baptised husbands!



THE GOOD THINGS PRAYER.

Introduction

I have been doing this short prayer exercise daily for about 30 years. Among my different ways of praying I have found it the easiest, most appealing way for me. It has also had an amazing influence on all my other ways of praying. It has changed me in different ways. Also, some others who have tried this practice for some time, have claimed it changed their way of praying and also themselves in different ways.

More correctly, it should be called the 'The Daily Review of Good-Things prayer-exercise' but let us just call it the Good Things Prayer. It is basically asking God to help me see more clearly some of the good things that He is continually giving me. I want to be able to notice them better! I find that the more I recognise them, the more I come to appreciate God's deep care of me in my daily life and consequently I feel closer to God.

What I mean by Good Things.

When I say good things here, I mean things like the following:- things that during the day pleased me, made me happy, that gave me a positive feeling or attitude, that gave me energy, examples may be ...

- * the joy of an unexpected meeting with someone I like very much;
- * the delight of receiving a long-awaited letter;

- * the satisfaction of something that turned out very successfully e.g. a baked cake, a test, a difficult meeting, a business deal, an outing, ..
- * the excitement of a fabulous bargain at the SALE, getting the C.D. that I wanted, ..
- * the relief over a worrisome problem solved, ..
- * the relief and gratitude at finding a lost document, ..
- * a refreshing walk on the shore, up a mountain, in a park.
- * the warm feeling caused by someone being very kind to me, very patient with me and absolving my mistake, ..
or
- * the delight and surprise at realising I was kind, patient, forgiving or gentle towards someone else, ..
- * discovering a feeling of peace in myself, enthusiasm for some good work, ...

These are examples of what I mean by *Good Things!*

How do I ask God to show me?

Firstly I pick a short time. Each time, before starting, I decide for how long it will be, e.g. three minutes, or five, or, if I am very tired, only two, – or whatever suits me at that time.

Then I put myself in as open, receptive and passive an attitude as possible and ask God, 'Show me some of the good things You gave me today!' I try to keep my mind empty! I resist thinking, searching or working to remember. I give the control to God. I want God to do all the work! The emphasis is on waiting for God to show me.

I am a person who finds that repeating something like ‘Show me, show me, show me,’ or ‘Show me good things, show me good things’ helps keep me focused on waiting for God to do this work. Other people might not find this repetition helpful.

To me it is like sitting down before a T.V. screen and giving the remote control into God’s hands. I then sit waiting patiently to see what He is going to show me! I try to discipline myself to wait till something pops into my mind. It reminds me of our old-time spring-toaster. I wait and wait and nothing seems to happen; then suddenly up springs the toast! So too I wait for a good thing to pop up. And often I am surprised!

Wait! Wait! Wait!

I suddenly realise that just waiting is very hard; it is not easy to keep one’s hands off the remote control. I call this ‘passive prayer’. As we follow this book and put it into practice, we will see how fruitful passive prayer is.

Being surprised!

Often something unexpected pops up. When the something good happened during the day, it seemed a small thing and soon got lost in the crowded daily events. Now it shows itself as a much more important gift. I now feel the joy of it more consciously and strongly and often I can detect a message behind it.

I no longer expect things to show themselves in chronological order from the last time I did this exercise. It is usually the most strongly felt good-things or the most recent good-things that appear first. Indeed, I usually find that I am led

backwards from the most recent good things to earlier ones.

A warning about the ‘Non-Goods’.

Don’t be surprised to discover that when you make this special time to be quiet and wait to be shown good things by God, the first thing that enters your mind is the opposite! Let us call it a ‘Non-good’. We seem to be so made that if, in a day we had a hundred good-things and only one or two ‘non-goods’, when we try to make a quiet space for ourselves, it would be the ‘non-good’ that would rush into that space and take over all our attention and feelings. It would not be the happy things but the unhappy memory of, for example, ‘I scratched our new car today’, or ‘So-and-So slighted me today’ or ‘Oh, I neglected to phone N.N.,’ causing a fierce urge in me to stop the prayer at once and go and phone before I forget again. I feel like I have to deliberately ‘tighten my seat-belt’ to keep myself from running away into activity!

For the first few months especially, we will experience this inclination to ‘non-goods’ very often and very strongly. So till we develop the practice better, we might have to spend most of the planned period just ‘pushing out’ these ‘non-goods’. We tell them to wait at least till after the Good Things Prayer is over. When I suddenly realise that these non-goods have sucked me into themselves, I have to ignore them, and turn back to God asking, ‘Are there no good things?’ Then I must wait to be shown one.

Happily, as we develop this habit of praying, we will

gradually find that good-things spring to mind much faster than before, and in greater variety. The ‘non-goods’ should become less powerful in taking over the time.

The value of ‘Non-Goods’

Later we will look at how to talk to God about these ‘non-goods’, too. They can be a valuable means for coming closer to God and other people. However, it is necessary to first meet God as a ‘Giver of good things’ before we can effectively talk to Him about the ‘non-goods’.

More explanations on the method....

When?

I do it every day at the time that suits best! It is usually before bedtime. But it can be done any time. For example, if you find you are usually too tired at bedtime, try noontime or before supper, or even at a different time every day if it suits you. But do it every day! – even for a very brief time.

Give the full time!

It is important that you give the full length of time that you have decided, even if the whole time seems spent struggling with ‘non-goods’, even if it looks like nothing will happen today! You will be surprised at times to find that it is in the last few seconds that something good jumps up, just like the toaster. Finish at the time decided.

Place.

This Good Things Prayer can be practised in all sorts of places,

e.g. walking somewhere .. waiting on a bus .. working in the garden .. ironing clothes .. quietly warming oneself at the fire .. in bed ..in a warm bath etc. Of course the less distractions the better. A quiet, calm, comfortable atmosphere is best.

Try it and see!

When you first hear about the Good Things Prayer you might think it is too easy to be real prayer! I challenge you: try it and see!

I strongly suggest that you experiment and find the best times, places and length of time that give you best results. These differ according to each one’s situation and character and may have to change to suit changing conditions in one’s life.

After some months, judge from any good changes in your prayer or in yourself, whether this prayer-exercise has any value for you!

The following Series

This art of passive prayer is the foundation of the whole series, and as the daily Good Things Review is a good teacher of this art, make sure you spend time practising it before going on to longer exercises, which will be described in later chapters. Also, after practising it faithfully for some months, chapter 2 will be more easily understood.

In using this book with another person or with a group, it helps to now read chapters 13 and 14 in Part 2 booklet.

ABOUT THE GOOD THINGS PRAYER AND ABOUT THIS BOOK.

Is the 'Good Things Exercise' really prayer?

When someone first hears about this practice of the Good Things Prayer they might ask 'Is this really prayer?' For many people, the word 'prayer' means saying certain special words learned from someone or somewhere else and said in certain circumstances. Usually it is said to obtain something from God or else with the feeling of fulfilling an obligation to God.

Prayer is...

In this book the word 'prayer' has a much wider and deeper meaning. It means anything that makes our relation with God more conscious, intimate, deep, concrete. The effort is not so much trying to reach God as to increasing our awareness that God is trying to 'get through' to us, and we must switch 'on' our receivers and respond more. That is what I mean by prayer. Listening and waiting and showing our inner selves to God are very important elements of prayer. Concentrating on God's activity is more important than paying all our attention to our own activity.

My hope is that this book will help people discover for

themselves this wider idea of prayer. I will suggest some prayer methods that I and others have found by experience to be fruitful for this. As they respond people will, hopefully, discover new ways of praying that are not mentioned here but which may suit them better for deepening their prayer-life and coming closer to God and to others. Encouraging 'try and see for yourself' will be a big theme in this book.

Learning by Discovery

Learning by discovery gives deeper knowledge than just being told about something. When I was young, I was told by my elders that there was electricity in a live electric wire. I believed them, of course. Yet, out of curiosity, I deliberately touched a live wire. The shock I got went all the way to my ankles! I now knew in a different and deeper way what I had been told about electricity. Discovery by oneself reinforces our learning!

Learning by Doing

If you have tried to learn to play the piano, swim, cook, drive a car or use a computer, you will know the importance of practice. Just hearing instructions or explanations is not sufficient.

Learning a good habit of prayer is no different! The purpose of this book is to help you learn by doing. Now, this Chapter 2 will have a lot of explanation! However the following chapters will be about suggesting 'how to do' and encouraging 'try it and see what happens'.

Difference between Prayer Exercises and a Habit of Prayer. You have already experienced doing the Good Things Prayer. We call it a prayer-exercise. It is very like putting in the time doing a physical exercise in order to become fit. The desired condition is to be fit all the time, – not just when doing the exercise. The same holds with spiritual exercises. The goal is spiritual fitness, not just at the time of the exercise, but all the time. Hopefully, the exercises in this book will lead to spiritual fitness.

This spiritual condition will be shown by a growing habit that leads to ‘praying always’. In this habit a person, more and more frequently, in all sorts of situations of daily life turns to God spontaneously and with no plan. Prayer exercises develop, maintain and deepen this habit.

The ‘Good-Things Prayer’ is a Prayer-Exercise!

As you see, the Good Things Prayer is a prayer-exercise – a very special and foundational prayer-exercise! It helps us to do other kinds of prayer better and, especially, it teaches the ‘passive prayer’ that is necessary to do longer prayer-exercises.

We can call it the *Backbone* of this series of prayer-exercises. We can’t emphasise enough how important it is to do it every day, even for a very short time!

Longer Prayer Exercises.

In the following chapters I will suggest longer prayer

exercises. These require at least 15 minutes. I suggest you do them as often as you can – maybe once or twice a week in the beginning. Hopefully, as you begin to find fruit and strength coming from them it will get easier to find time and desire to pray these more often and to lengthen them.

If the Daily Good-things Prayer could be called the *Backbone* of this effort to obtain a ‘habit of prayer’, these longer exercises can be called the *Muscles*. They add strength and growth to ‘spiritual fitness’.

Try and see what best suits you?

I suggest that you seriously try each long exercise for a while and discover if any of them help you. Trying an exercise only two or three times is not enough! After trying different exercises for some time, concentrate on those two or three exercises that are most fruitful, and use them often.

Everyone is different. Just as each one wears different clothes, so likewise each one finds that certain ways of praying and certain prayer-exercises suit him or her best. You can also find that the choice of different times of the day, different lengths of the exercises or different places, can better prepare us for fruit from the prayer. These ‘best conditions’, of course, may change as we ourselves change.

‘Judge from the Fruit’ is the test of usefulness.

We judge the effectiveness of these exercises from their results! After praying in this way for some time – at least three

or four months – do we notice any change in ourselves? For example, do these exercises help us to see things in a new light? Are we becoming more thankful people? Or more generous or patient or even more relaxed and trusting? Are we more aware of God at work in the ‘ups and downs’ of our daily lives? And later, have we realised that God was with us in both our joys and our sorrows, in our successes and failures, in our strengths and weaknesses? This is how we judge the value of these exercises.

As we will see, the real test of this book will be, ‘Has it brought me closer to God and to others?’

Reviewing

Reviewing one’s prayer time, as shown above, can be very valuable and will be explained more fully in Chapter 6.

Sharing

The value of sharing about prayer with another person, or others, is taken up in Chapter 13 (Part 2 booklet)

Who can use The Good Things exercise?

In Japan some of the participants of these courses, as Sunday-school teachers, used the Good Things Prayer exercise for primary-school children with good results. I also taught these exercises to over-seventies and some have used them amazingly well. Many of the participants had been finding their old way of praying had become dull, listless and was not giving any strength to face the challenges of daily

life. For them these exercises were a new step into deeper prayer and coming closer to God. As long as there is a desire to pray better, and at the same time a willingness to give time and effort to discovering how, this book should help.

Praying as a human.

As I said in the *Introduction* to the book, I don’t use Liturgy or Scripture in it. I limit myself to fundamental elements which are in prayer of any kind.

These are, –

- * turning to a Greater Power that is outside ourselves.
- * believing this Greater Power works in everyone’s life to bring all closer to Itself and to one another.
- * involving the basic elements of prayer that we have emphasised above – waiting passively, noticing, responding. Thus, here I speak only about praying using the human faculties.

However, these basic elements of prayer are fundamental to Christian prayer in all its forms. This becomes evident as we move into Praying with Scripture or Liturgical prayer.

More uses of The Good Things exercise.

This way of praying can be used as a preparation for meetings or before a family meal or such. All together can use two or three minutes in silence to look at their good-things since the last meeting, family meal, etc.

On a personal note, I often use it as a preparation for Mass, or for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, etc.

Putting your petition on 'Hold.'

If you pick up this book looking for help to get a problem solved, a suffering taken away, help in a relationship or such, for a while put your desire on 'hold' or in 'a bottom drawer'. First of all, spend time and effort, through these early exercises, to get to know God better and discover His wanting to care for you. Then you can open the drawer and, together with God, look at the problem.

Group use of this book.

Experience has shown that where people join together in some way to try to improve their prayer life, prayer itself becomes deeper and often easier. Chapter 14 (Part 2 booklet) 'For Groups' develops this theme and throughout the book I will, occasionally, give hints on group use.

The Spiritual Journey.

Each one of us is on a journey. It is a journey in which God is always inviting us into a greater closeness to Himself which, in turn, leads to a greater closeness to one another. God is inviting us to discover that He is always with us. He is inviting us to listen to Him and to talk to Him. This is what prayer does for us. But I hope this book will help you discover these things for yourself.

A LONGER GOOD THINGS PRAYER EXERCISE.

Here is another exercise that develops the habit or art of praying. It is based on the Daily Good Things Review. Both exercises focus on God's activity, asking God to show us some of the good things that He is doing in our lives.

However it differs in that,

- the prayer period is longer.
- the chosen period for seeing 'good things' is longer.

How I do this Exercise.

- Each time, my first step is to decide for how many minutes I am going to do it but I learnt from experience that I need at least 15 minutes to 'get into' it.
- My second step is picking a period of my life longer than one day to look at. For example:- during this last month, a certain year, on a recent holiday or since some important event in my life or change in my life situation, since meeting some new person or joining a new group, ...

(more concrete examples below.)

- Then my third step is asking God to show me some of the good things I have received during this time. As in the

daily Good Things Prayer, I try to relax and wait passively to see what comes up.

I myself usually start by slowly repeating silently the same word or phrase over and over again. I usually say, 'Please show me, Please show me,' or something like that. This helps me to keep focused on God at work and on my own desire to see good things.

Not hurrying on.

When something pops up, I stay looking at it as long as I can.

It might even surprise me because I hadn't adverted to it till now. Then I notice the warm, happy feelings this gives me. I might discover myself repeating 'that was good, that was good'. Then I might notice my head wanting to actively search for a bigger example of the one that popped up. I have to resist this urge! I try to stay with this small example and try to taste more fully the good feelings it has given. I stay with it till another good thing pops into the centre of my awareness or memory and takes over my attention.

No order of appearance

Like the short daily good things prayer, I often find myself reversing-up from very recent things to things at the beginning of the period being covered. For the most part, very recent good things appear first. At other times, some big or strong event during the period comes to mind first.

Feelings

The aim is not to make a list of good things, but rather to notice and taste the good feelings that they cause in me and notice how this affects me positively. Later, I realise that fruitful changes in me flow from these effects.

Distractions

If I discover myself 'distracted', I go back to the start and ask again to be shown. For example, I suddenly find myself planning a holiday, thinking about getting a new computer or how to hit a better shot at my favourite game. Then I realise that these things have taken over all my attention. So I have to go back to the start and ask God again to show me, show me, show me what He has already given me during this longer period of my life.

Dealing with 'Non-Goods'

Sometimes, like in the daily good things exercise, I might notice that a 'non-good' has taken control of my attention. For example, some worry or anger or fear has taken up all my thoughts and feelings and energy. So I turn to God and start asking 'Show me a good thing'. I stay like this till the length of my planned time is up.

Being shown Good Things in 'Non-Goods'

I emphasise again: don't get sucked into a 'non-good'. Keep putting it outside this prayer-exercise time and keep asking to be shown some good thing. In longer exercises there may be occasions when it seems to be impossible to keep these

‘non-goods’ out of the prayer. So, after trying hard for a long time to keep them outside the prayer time, I change my asking. I turn to God and start asking, ‘In this suffering is there not one little good thing? Show me that!’ I find that if I keep asking like this, eventually something will pop up and then I stay with that good thing.

(Later, we will talk about how to find God in pain, loss, etc.)

Full time

Why should we decide a time-length, and why always try to use the full time? Many people have had the following experience. Sometimes nothing seems to be happening during the prayer time. It just seems hopeless and feels tiresome and frustrating. So they want to give up on that prayer-time, but instead, they doggedly keep trying for the full length of time. And it is in the last few seconds that something amazingly pops up! After you have had a few delightful experiences like that, you begin to understand why waiting-out the full time is so important!

Also you will know from your experience of training for physical fitness, how helpful it is to use a decided length of time for a particular physical exercise. It is the same for these exercises for spiritual fitness.

More examples of longer Good-Things Exercises

Here are more examples of periods in my history that I pray. This list may start you finding periods like these in your own

life. After some time you will discover what periods are most fruitful for you in your present spiritual condition.

- during the previous month,
- when I was in High School,
- since I joined the music group,
- since I met N.N.,
- since I started working at N.N.,
- since I moved to N.N.,
- since I got married,
- when I was in the N.N. football team,
- (a special one), since I started the Good Things Prayer!

A Two-Week Challenge!

Here is a special challenge to help you understand this exercise! For at least 15 minutes each day for a week pick a different period in your life and ask to be shown good things during that time. Notice, or better still write down, the good things that you have discovered and how this makes you feel.

Then the following week do the same periods over again and notice how different things come up. Repeating the same exercise, different fruit! I am using the word ‘fruit’ to indicate particular benefits which may result from a period of prayer.

This means that the same periods can be used again and again because each prayer period will be a new experience with different fruit. Repeating gives an idea of the wide

possibilities and riches in this exercise. Indeed, I recommend repeating periods hoping to find more fruit in each. Then I suggest that you pick two or three of the most fruitful periods and use them often. As we return to the various periods we become more and more aware of the constancy of God's presence and His care for each one of us.

Periodically reviewing one's notes can be very fruitful.

Fruit

By fruit I mean both Good Things that pop up and the good effects they cause in me. At the beginning, material objects or concrete items will be the big part of the things noticed. But later more internal and less visible things will start to appear. For example, I may someday realise the patience of another towards me and then, some later day, I will notice – to my surprise – a new patience in myself towards someone else! I now realise that it too was a good thing; and indeed, a bigger good thing! However, it is important to know that it takes quite some time practising this exercise before I become aware of deeper realisations like this. We must be patient with ourselves! After all, God is!

The daily Good Things review always a must!

I recommend all these longer exercises in addition to the Daily Good Things Review. I firmly believe that the Daily Review is the backbone of our growth in prayer. It should never be neglected, no matter how short it may be. Then these longer ones can build up the muscles!

'FINDING MESSAGES FROM GOD IN MY OWN HISTORY'

Discovering God at work in surprising coincidences

This prayer-exercise also helps me to 'hear' messages from God that influence me now. Through being shown again certain coincidental events of my own history I learn more about God's attitude to me. I discovered this exercise in the following way.

One morning when I was doing a Longer Good Things Prayer in my parish in Japan, the memory which I will relate below, popped up. I got a lot of fruit from it. It gave me a message from God and affected my daily living when I repeated the prayer. As I wanted to see more of these coincidences in my life, to hear the messages and be influenced by them, I developed this new exercise.

As you will see, I do it in the same way as I do the longer Good Things Prayer exercise. That means that in a decided period of time, I ask God to show me again certain things that have a message for me and I wait passively, with expectation and patience, for something to pop up. These special things are coincidental events of my life that teach me about God's attitude to me. Also they show me certain incidents that led me to be here at this time and able to pray like this. The

following is the memory that came up during that Longer Good Things Prayer.

The Incident

I was brought back to an experience I had the last time I was home on holidays in Ireland. Late one night, far from home, my car broke down. I was told where a mechanic lived. So reluctantly and diffidently, I went along to ask his help. To my amazement he knew me and gave me a great welcome. He was from my home town! He had been a few classes below me in the same primary school and remembered me well. He was delighted to help. He went out to fix my car and his wife even made a tasty supper for me while I was waiting. And he refused any payment, saying, 'The next time you are in the area, call in'! I came away so delighted and grateful. I was amazed how good God had been to me. He even changed what was a hardship into a joy.

Then I realised in my prayer of that morning the further truth. And I said to God, 'It is amazing to think that over forty years beforehand, You made preparations to look after me that night'!

How I do this Exercise

I do this prayer-exercise in the same way as I do the Good Things Prayer exercise. That means I ask:-

- To be shown more clearly coincidences that influenced the path leading to my present condition,
- to understand more deeply the messages they give me,
- that I allow these messages to influence me now.

I decide for how long?

Each time I decide for how long I am going to do the exercise and I resolve to stick to the chosen time. For example, as I begin to learn how to do this, I will pick at least 20 minutes.

I wait to be shown

Then, repeating slowly and rhythmically 'Show me how You led me to this place,' I wait to see what comes up! And the waiting becomes the important thing!

As I said, I find in my passive prayer that the repetition of a word or a phrase helps me to stay focused while waiting, to see things in a new way and to notice my changing feelings. The word or phrase may keep changing too as I notice what is happening inside me. Of course this happens in various ways from person to person because God leads each one individually.

Results

I have done this exercise often and each time what I am shown, or the way I am shown it, or what strikes most strongly, is different and unexpected. Sometimes I see many things; other times I am caught by just one or two significant experiences; sometimes I have to patiently wait through dark periods when nothing happens. Sometimes an amazing coincidence pops up. One example was, walking across a busy intersection, I unexpectedly met someone I had badly wanted to meet but couldn't contact, yet, here to my joy, was that person, smiling at me! Yet, if I had come 30 seconds

earlier or 30 seconds later I would have missed that person completely!

Ultimately, this says to me that Someone looks after me!

Sometimes it is during the prayer itself that I become aware of this message; sometimes it is in the review after the prayer, that I realise it.

The jig-saw's message

When I notice two or three of these amazing coincidences occurring close together and connecting to form a big clear picture, I am reminded of a jig-saw puzzle. It gives me a message that some Great Power outside myself is putting things together for me and saying, 'You are important to me!'

Noticing such coincidences outside prayer periods

For me, doing this exercise from time to time has led to a spontaneous habit, outside a prayer-exercise, of quickly noticing 'The Jig-saw Maker' working in my daily living. I now more quickly notice this when these things happen. For example, in happy meetings on escalators, trains, at airports, I suddenly recall that the 'Great Planner' is at work.

I am into retirement age, yet I can still notice, for example, how a childhood hobby can be a source of help to me even now. Or I find people whom I had met many, many years before, now come back into my life to play a different role. Even people I once quarrelled with have since become close friends.

Later fruit from painful experiences

Even the experience I have obtained through painful events, dark miserable periods, even mistakes or embarrassments, has become very useful now for myself or for others. When I notice this I have to say, 'You were with me then and I didn't notice it', or 'You were preparing then to help me NOW!'

More personal experiences.

As I see myself now, an old Japanese missionary I want to smile. I remember well the night, a month after ordination as a Columban missionary priest, that our superior gathered us together to tell us what missionary country we had been appointed to. I had a few favourite mission countries in mind but Japan was not one of them! It was said the language was very difficult, took endless study that, at best, gave poor results. There were all kinds of rules of etiquette, and for a young idealistic missionary 'adventurer' it was like being put into a straightjacket. It was said it was really difficult to get to know anyone there. And after all this, there were few results for one's efforts. But, to my disappointment, I was sent to Japan! And for the first 20 years or so I felt all these things very much.

But gradually things changed. Now, half a century since that night when I was appointed, I can look back and say, 'I am so grateful that I was sent to Japan. I don't think I would have developed the way I did somewhere else.' I wonder would I be as contented or energetic as I am now. I doubt it! I certainly changed continually during the years. And as I changed, I discovered that Japanese people seemed to change at the same

time. And it was then I discovered that I could really get to know people deeply. Yes, Japan was the best place for me to be sent to. It shows that God is “smarter” than I am!

Prayer exercise review

For about five or six minutes I review what happened. Here are examples of questions that I ask myself. I don't use them all each time.

‘What did I get from the prayer time; do I feel different now compared to the start of my prayer?’

Were there any surprises: e.g. in seeing a new connection between people or events almost forgotten? ..or any amazing coincidences?

What feelings did these give rise to?

Did I get any message?

How well did I wait?

Would I like to do this exercise again?

Is there anything I would like to write in my notebook or tell another about?’

Suggestion

Do the above ‘ history’ exercise a number of times. Try some reviewing. Use a notebook.

‘MEETING GOD IN NATURE’

Praying and not realising it

There are some people who pray, yet do not realise that what they are doing is praying! ‘Praying Nature’ can be one good example of this. But I think I can best explain this by first telling a story.

A Story

Some years ago when I was teaching this series, I asked some of those attending it, to help me in talking about Nature as a help to prayer. I regarded them as more in contact with Nature than myself. I asked them to speak out of their own relationship to Nature, and about any help it gave for praying or feeling closer to God and experiencing change. One lady was a very talented but shy and retiring person. But here is what I remember of her talk. It certainly impressed and helped me. I will try to give it in her words.

The flower spoke to her

‘When Father teased me again that the time had come to give a talk to this group about my experiences with Nature, this time I didn't hesitate, even for a moment, in saying ‘Yes’. Previously I would have said ‘No’ instantly. When I was asked this time, I felt something inside me saying ‘the time has come!’ So I accepted Father’s request without hesitation! I believe that my attitude towards life has changed dramatically since I spent time gazing at the wonder of a wild

flower blooming quietly by itself on the roadside. It is called a 'skullcap'. I have seen them growing in bunches in the woods and on the river banks. But I had never seen a lone one, blooming on a busy roadside, and growing up through thick concrete! I gazed at that flower for a long, long time, wondering where did this frail looking little flower get the marvellous power to patiently force its way up through that hard concrete to bloom in the light.

Then I realised that I was, till now, exactly like a usual 'skullcap', growing in a cosy and safe place in the middle of a bunch and not trying to do anything special. However, through this little flower I was being shown that God had sown certain strengths in me too a long time ago and now the time had come for me to display the gifts I had received. I felt a great desire to break through my own hard shell and to come out, to bloom and display the fruit of the Spirit. And since that time, although it is rather slow, I find myself changing in different ways.

Our present day relation with nature.

We don't have to go to Niagara Falls, the Sahara desert, the Grand Canyon or the Himalayas to be enthralled by Nature. To stand on high cliffs gazing, awestruck, at gigantic North Atlantic waves or, meditatively, at an evening ring of purple mountains is to experience being drawn deeper into oneself and closer to Nature. Sadly, we soon forget its influence as we go our busy tourist way.

We are far removed from working with the soil or with animals or trees or growing the food we eat. We would not

think of spending a quiet day alone in a little boat just listening to Nature. I once climbed Mt. Fuji – surrounded by the noise of the loud radios people carried with them! Of course we leave offices in groups to go off and view the cherry-blossoms but don't think of hearing any message from them! Usually I eat my food in a hurry, almost without tasting it. If alone, I feel I should be reading the newspaper at the same time. I don't try to let the taste talk to me!

Today we live in a world surrounded by so much that is manufactured by ourselves. It is a world of concrete, steel and plastic. We are surrounded by the noise of engines, loudspeakers and traffic. We smell smog and chemicals and exhaust fumes. This is the air we breathe.

We can see a beautiful sunset or rainbow, a cat playing with her kittens, or hear birds singing in a forest and smile and hurry on and quickly forget. We don't make time to let these touch us inside. Giving a glance and a nod at Mt. Fuji from the Bullet Train is a good metaphor of our modern relationship to Nature.

Yet, deep within us we know how it can influence us. Just think of the different ways a dull dreary day in February or a bright blue sky in April, can influence us. After a day hiking in the mountains, after a long walk through the fields or even after an hour weeding in the garden, we are different people! So these thoughts urge us to devote time to coming closer to Nature.

We can do this for recreation, for example, walks on an autumn leaf-strewn path, along a sandy shore or a shaded

river. Or we can be attentive to Nature as an open door to inner stillness and peace. We are drawn into prayer.

Here is what I call 'Praying Nature.' I will summarise the steps; then explain them in more detail.

How to 'Pray Nature'.

1. Pick an object in nature to focus on.
2. Decide how long you will give to the exercise; then adhere to it.
3. Concentrate only on intently gazing, (or hearing, smelling, feeling or tasting) the object. Be passive. Let the object draw you closer to itself!
4. Notice what is gradually happening inside yourself. Notice how you want to respond!

Picking an object

Here are some examples. They involve using the senses of sight, sound, smell, touch, taste or inner senses of imagination or memory:

Gazing steadily at a flower, a potted plant, a butterfly in the garden, the moon on a frosty night, a sunset, snow falling, the first green shoots breaking through the winter soil, a bird gathering materials for her nest, ants busily working together ..

Listening to waves on the shore, the gurgling of a stream, birds singing on a spring morning, the wind in the trees...

Smelling newly mown grass, wood-smoke, roses ...

Feeling a soft, fresh breeze on your face, the warm sun on your neck, the heat of a cosy fire, a new woollen sweater...

Tasting slowly, each mouthful of food, cool spring water on a hot day, freshly picked strawberries, red wine, ...

Indoors

We can still pray this way indoors by staring out a window at scenery, at a garden, a bird... Some people pray while listening to tapes of birds singing and other Nature sounds; other people burn candles that emit aromas of flowers; still others may use a picture of lovely scenery, of a pet, a flower arrangement...

In a quiet place we can use our *imagination* or *memory* to enter Nature. We can imagine ourselves as being an oak tree, a snowflake, a canary, a violet, a river, a dog...

Or we can remember a special scenic view, or a mountain climb, ...

Experiment with different objects, using different senses. Find your own favourite objects that touch and affect you best and find which sense is easiest for you to use. Then pray these favourites frequently.

Deciding the length of the prayer

Each time first decide the length of the prayer time and use it fully. I recommend at least 20 minutes.

Prayer Time

Begin by just concentrating on gazing steadily at (listening to, feeling, smelling or tasting) the chosen object. At the

beginning we may even find it very hard to hold our gaze like this for five minutes! But this struggle to resist thinking, judging, reflecting or doing ‘something else’ is a sign that we are on the right track. We must be passive; keep our minds empty! We must just wait to see what happens.

Gradually we will discover, more and more, details that we had not noticed before. These draw us closer and closer to the object. We might even imagine this object of Nature ‘talking’ to us. Or we might find ourselves having a conversation with the object.

One lady shared about being deep in the mountains and feeling ‘Silence so deep it seemed to hug me with strong arms’. Once while gazing at angry waves crashing on rocks, I seem to hear them say, ‘You are not alone, we know your frustration’. Realisation comes: God is whispering to us in such moments!

Results: Inner changes.

These experiences of being drawn closer can give us new strength. The experience of the lady in our opening story of the little Skullcap flower is a perfect example of ‘praying Nature’, and praying spontaneously too!

Frightening Side Of Nature

Of course there are negative reactions from experiences of Nature, eg in thunder and lightning, earthquakes, hurricanes, volcanoes, floods, etc. We will want to learn how to pray through these negative experiences too. However, following this book, get used to praying through the positives first. Then we can learn how to discover values in the negatives also.

A SHARING

After Vatican two the helper who had done so much in enriching our spiritual life had emphasised three special areas for becoming more aware of and closer to God. They were meeting God in ‘*events of our daily lives*’, ‘*Finding God in Nature*’ and in ‘*Praying Scripture*’. When I eventually came to sharing on these with organised groups and faced talking about ‘*Meeting God in Nature*’ I was conscious that, even though they were a highly developed First World country, the Japanese were still more a community-conscious and more instinctively in touch with nature than I was. **One example showing me this was finding that a big object of ‘Flower Arrangement’ was to generate ‘inner complete harmony with the Universe’.** So I remember well a certain phone call. After I had retired back to Ireland, I received a telephone call from a former participant in our spirituality sharing-group telling me that she and 2 others of the class were starting a sharing group in a neighbouring parish. I was so delighted and encouraging. But then she became embarrassed and apologetic. She ‘confessed’ that, while they were using my – or our – notes, that they planned to first start with ‘*Meeting God in Nature*’. Well I was even more delighted. It showed how much they were allowing their praying in their own Japanese cultural strengths to assist themselves. Also I realise that it helps us ‘Westerners’ today when we see the growth of world-awareness of the environment and inter relatedness of the Universe as another aid to, hopefully, a deepening awareness of our relation to God and to one another.

REVIEWING MY PRAYER-EXERCISES AND WAYS OF PRAYING

I was surprised when at a prayer workshop it was suggested that we review our prayer exercises. However as I followed through on the suggestion and experienced positive results from it, I made reviewing a practice which I now rarely omit. Here I wish to explain what review of prayer is and how I approach it.

The first thing to note is that reviewing prayer is different to prayer itself. In prayer – especially passive prayer – thinking can be an obstacle; in reviewing, thinking is essential. Thinking is, as it were, talking to oneself; prayer is talking and, more importantly, listening to God. We will look now at:

- 1) review of a prayer-exercise just finished and
- 2) review of habits of praying over a period of time.

I. REVIEWING A PRAYER EXERCISE JUST FINISHED

For a short time.

I am thinking of a review of about five minutes of prayer-exercises of over twenty minutes duration.

Soon after each prayer-exercise

I say ‘soon after’, because if it is too long afterwards, some things will not be remembered clearly enough. Yet, it is a good thing to have some kind of a break between the prayer and the review; it might only be a change of place or posture or, perhaps, relaxing over a cup of tea.

Examining what happened during the prayer time.

In reviewing I ask myself questions like the ones below. Of course, I do not ask all these questions each time. The important ones seem to come up spontaneously if I make the time and concentrate. These are only examples to help each one discover his or her own best questions.

‘How did the prayer finish up?’

This, for me, is usually the most important question. I ask myself how I was feeling at the end of the prayer. Then, briefly I think back to the beginning. This helps me to notice any changes that happened during it. Firstly, I focus on positive feelings or new ways of seeing things or on a new energy in myself. ‘What fruit did I get out of this prayer?’ is another way of asking this question. When I notice negative things, I ask myself ‘what are these telling me?’

‘Did the time go fast?’

I find this question useful. Generally speaking, a prayer time that passes quickly was focused. I may have had to struggle a lot. Perhaps I may have had to go back to the beginning many times and ask again for what I was praying. It may even

have been a painful exercise but I was there – attentive and alert!

‘Did I finish up feeling drawn to respond in some way?’

When a prayer time is energetic, I find it often follows the following steps. Firstly, I notice that I am beginning to see something in a new way. Then, I notice this has caused new feelings in me. From these new feelings come new desires and new energy and I may feel drawn to a new response. For example, I am praying for someone who has hurt me. Then something pops into my mind that might make me see this person in a new light, perhaps how he or she may have been hurt in his or her own history. I now find this is beginning to give me compassion and a desire to understand this person more.

‘Do I want to do this prayer exercise again?’

I often feel that I must repeat this prayer – maybe many times. Sometimes, it is because it was a busy, fruitful prayer and I finished up strengthened, grateful, determined or challenged. At other times, I might feel that there was something important to receive from this prayer but that I really hadn’t yet received it. So I would want to go back to listen again.

‘Has a special summarising word or symbol or feeling popped up?’

Occasionally, a special word, or symbol that summarises wonderfully the fruit of the prayer, pops up. Then I find that, if during my daily living, I recall that word or symbol, much

of the feeling and fruit of the prayer is renewed in me.

‘Is there anything about this prayer that I would like to share with someone?’

Good sharing comes out of good reviewing.

Conclusion

It is evident that reviewing holds many benefits. It deepens awareness of what happens in prayer. It sharpens the call to respond. Sometimes in prayer itself it may seem that God is not present but in the review some particular thing, unexpected and unnoticed till now, shows He is there, hearing and answering.

II. REVIEWING AFTER A LONGER PERIOD OF PRACTISING PRAYER-EXERCISES.

Periodic review

After a certain period of time, I look back over my habits of praying. For example, I might decide to do it on the last Sunday of each month for about 20 minutes or so. I always do it during my retreats. In a Prayer Group, a special time for this review can be scheduled.

I ask myself questions like the following:

‘Am I giving the full time?’

I check to see did I wait till the end of the full time of the prayer-exercise.

‘What seemed to be the best time of the day for me?’

Some people pray best early in the morning; some pray best at night. Some people do best by having a fixed time each day; others find changing the time to suit circumstances gives them the best results. So each person might ask, ‘What time usually helps me best?’ One of the strongest suggestions in this book applies here: experiment and discover!

‘What is the best length of time for me?’

This likewise is to be discovered by experimenting with different lengths of time.

‘Am I finding and using the best places?’

Where I pray has an influence on my prayer. Quiet is always an advantage; noise a distraction or obstacle. Comfort too is important. If I am praying in a place too warm or too cold, or in an uncomfortable position, I cannot pray as well as in a comfortable place or position. The experimenter will learn these from experience. Also, for example, sleepy experiences teach me that after a big, heavy meal, sitting in a warm, comfortable place, it will be difficult to have a very deep, concentrated, fruitful prayer!

‘Am I, since I started following this method of prayer, discovering anything about God? About myself? About my relation to God? About praying?’

‘Have I ever been surprised at what I discovered during these exercises or prayers?’

Am I finding favourite exercises?’

Am I growing or deepening in any way?’

Reviewing is a natural practice.

I said in the beginning, that I was surprised to hear there was such a thing as reviewing prayer and that it was a very valuable practice. But now I realise I should not have been surprised. After all, it is a very natural thing to want to discover what caused something to go well so it might be repeated or to find what hindered something from going well.

The housewife who is delighted with what she has just baked, may unconsciously review her efforts. She might ponder, ‘Was it that new brand of flour, was it that particular oven temperature or was it the different baking time that gave this better result?’ Or after hitting a good shot at his favourite sport or even more so, after having hit a bad one, the player starts thinking ‘maybe I should try doing ...’ etc. So when one wants to improve, spending time noticing what went well, or what did not, or what might improve things, is not so strange!

EXAMPLES OF OTHER HELPS

Body stillness

When my mind is very busy and ‘jumpy’ with many things, I find that walking slowly can use up some of the unnecessary energy, and help keep me calm and waiting. But I notice that when something deep catches me, I spontaneously pause or stop. This proves that naturally a still body is best for deep passive prayer.

Breathing

Normally, I do not consciously use breathing-exercises to help my prayer, but many people do.

Using a notebook.

Using a notebook for jotting down important points from review can be valuable. In fact these articles on prayer have been born from piles of notes made after reviews of my prayer!

Patience

It takes some people a long time to learn how to review and get something out of it. So be patient with yourself! Fruit will eventually appear if you persevere.

Putting into practice!

‘Am I putting into practice what we have studied so far?’ is a question to ask oneself continually, as you use this book. The chapters here are not just to teach! It is no good if one reads them and says ‘Now I am delighted to understand that,’ and does not start practising them very, very often – if not daily. Rushing off to the next chapter, without trying to put the previous one into practice, really doesn’t help growth in prayer at all. Some practice and God’s help will show when to move on.

This is something for leaders of prayer groups to remember to emphasise.

MEETING MY OWN GOD

Here, I want to share with you the most important discovery I made through practising the Good Things Prayer. I will explain how valuable this discovery is for growth in prayer.

What I discovered

After practising this Prayer for some time, I noticed that as I waited passively, and then became aware of good things popping up on my inner ‘T.V. screen’, I also noticed feelings of surprise, gratitude or joy that came with them. Then, later, I noticed that I would be repeating silently, rhythmically, in awe, words like ‘You were there!’ or ‘You were at work there!’ or ‘You are good to me!’ or words like that, while being conscious of God’s presence in some way.

A ‘Mantra’

Later I learned that this rhythmic repetition which I had experienced, is used by many peoples in their practice of passive or contemplative prayer to keep the mind from wandering in different directions and to keep it focused on what it is waiting for. It is often called a mantra, which is a word from Sanskrit, meaning an instrument of thought. It is much used by Buddhists, Hindus and others. I found it coming naturally to me and helping me to concentrate.

My 'own Mantra'

So what had been happening to me was that I was discovering mantras of my own that helped me to encapsulate what I was experiencing concerning God's contact with me. Gradually, one of these, 'You are at work!' became 'my mantra.' I noticed too, I would spontaneously say it in different ways; sometimes emphasising the word 'You', at other times the words 'at work'. Of course, it contains many of the meanings of the other mantras too, such as God being 'with me', 'being good to me,' etc.

Find your own 'Mantra'.

Those drawn to praying with a mantra, will probably experience it revealing itself progressively. In the beginning, it is usual to find more than one. However, gradually a particular one will emerge as the No 1. favourite. This is to be accepted, with gratitude, as one's own personal mantra! Perhaps later it may change, due to new experiences in prayer or a different situation in life or an older mantra may come back but with more strength. Prayer review can be very helpful in discovering the mantra.

Using That Discovery – In Reverse!

Using My Mantra Or 'Prayer-Mobile' To Contact God.

An even more important discovery I made was that I could use my own mantra in reverse! I found that, when I didn't feel in contact with God, by deliberately beginning to repeat my mantra, I could be brought back into contact with God

again! I was being brought back to where I had previously felt I had met God. Just as I discovered that the new feelings of contact gave rise to my mantra, I also discovered that repetition of the mantra could give rise to feelings of contact with God!

I learned to use this at the beginning of all kinds of prayers or during prayer if, for example, I became distracted, to bring myself into contact with 'my own God' again. Sometimes I call this my 'prayer-mobilephone' rather than 'my mantra.'

'My own God' – A most important discovery!

When I say 'my own God', I am thinking of a God that is more than the God I have been told about by others. **It is the God I have met in experiences in my daily life and a God who shows me that I am important to Him.** He looks after me and I feel He wants to draw me closer. That's what I mean by 'my own God.'

Calling myself up!

Of course this prayer-mobile is really not to call God up. It is to call myself up! I call myself back before the God I met before. I am calling myself out of all the clutter and obstacles that are overcoming me, and keeping me from seeing God at work here. My head tells me that God is always there waiting for me; it is I who have wandered off out of contact. God never switches off His mobile phone! He is always gently trying to whisper to me. I often forget to switch mine 'on'.

So my own mantra is like my own prayer-mobile number which God has given me for quick contact. Imagine God, in my prayer, showing me that private prayer-mobile number which He has prepared for me for better contact!

Times I deliberately use my Mantra.

To start my prayer

I have discovered that my mantra is a great way to start praying, especially when I am tired, upset, distracted, scattered, angry, etc. It clears away confusing thoughts, tidies up scattered feelings and creates space for me to turn to face God. It is like someone who helps me tidy up my room to receive a visitor.

Also, when I am vague about *whom* I am really trying to talk with during the coming prayer time it helps me to focus and brings me into contact with God.

If distracted during prayer time

Also during my prayer time, if I notice I have wandered off from contact and got lost in thinking or distractions, this mantra can help bring me back into contact with God again. I 'dial in'; that is I deliberately start repeating my mantra.

I use this practice before all kinds of prayer!

So now, I usually use this practise for starting all kinds of prayers, e.g. preparation for Mass, or for the Sacrament of Reconciliation! No doubt the reader can easily understand

how this practice helps before a prayer of thanks or of praise, but will probably be surprised to hear how important it is before a Prayer of petition!

It may cause even more surprise when I say that I use my mantra at the beginning of angry and complaining prayers! I will talk about these kinds of prayer later.

But the big point I want to emphasise here is that, before asking God for things, or before we can tell God how we are feeling, or before we can listen to Him, we first have to be in contact with Him! We first have to put ourselves before our 'own God!' This prayer-mobile, switched on, is my way for contacting Him.

Throughout my day

Till now I have been talking about prayer-exercises and scheduled times of prayer. But I am also discovering that this habit causes the mantra to spontaneously arise during different activities and happenings of my daily life. If something joyous and unexpected happens I may find it springing up. I find myself repeating silently and almost unconsciously, 'You are at work'. At other times, when I am in a happy or reflective mood, I notice it at the back of my mind, like background music.

Then, at other times, when I find myself confused, angry, or puzzled, I deliberately switch it on and it can be a channel of patience, hope or calmness.

Notes

Calling God 'You'.

In my reviews of prayer, I have come to realise how much I called God 'You' during my prayer. I was saying, 'You were at work there!' 'You were behind that gift!' and 'You are showing me!' etc. I talked to God as I would to another person facing me! This is not sending prayers out into outer space, with a fear that they would be lost out there, as I had been doing previously! Nor is it just thinking about what God might do, etc. As I said before, 'thinking about' is not prayer, though it can be a good preparation for it. Now, I am realising that I have spontaneously turned to God, am calling God 'You' and am now beginning to really pray, i.e. talk to God heart to heart!

Symbols and special experiences of God

Sometimes, during a deep prayer, someone may see a *symbol* that summarises the whole experience of feeling God being close and helping. For example, if one is feeling lost, the image of a guiding hand may come to mind and give comfort or a particular *memory* of God's saving help in some frightening crisis.

In an early workshop on prayer that I attended, the speaker kept repeating, '*If you want to meet God, go back to where you met Him before!*' These words influenced me greatly. They are good words also for summing up this whole chapter!

ADVICE

Out of these many hints for better prayer, focus on those you are finding fruitful. Feel free to set aside others. The time may come when you will discover their help also. And remember that sharing about one's spiritual journey with another (an anam-chara) or others is very fruitful.



THANKS

The existence of this book and these booklets is due to the experience, input, sharing and cooperation of countless 'Pilgrims' on our Spiritual Journey in the 'Modern World'. But I would like to highlight two helpers, Bob Doherty, a Boston Jesuit who, post Vatican II, spent much time with the Columban Missionaries in Japan fostering Spiritual 'seeds' towards *awareness* of and deepening relationship to God and His active presence 'in the Modern World'. Also Sister Patricia Sweeney, a Columban Missionary Sister, helped so much to present our experiences so clearly in the book.

Discoveries in Prayer Parts One and Two
are available on the Web at
www.columbans.ie/spirituality

Also on the Web by M. Hanratty are Booklets
“Discoveries in Praying Scripture”
Volumes One and Two
They are available on the Web at
www.columbans.ie/spirituality/praying-scripture