



Praying with a 'Piece of Nature'

This is a prayer of noticing and of imagination

Introduction

A 'piece of nature' might be a pot plant, a bunch of flowers, something in your garden (if you have one) the contents of a window box or plant hanger, a bird feeder, something you see on your walk (such as a dandelion growing in a crack in the pavement), a shell, pine cone, or any other natural thing.

Or, I might see something outside on a walk (a flower, leaf or stone) and take it home or take a photo of it.

Alternatively, I might choose to pray with something I see online, e.g. on social media such as a photo or video of wildlife.

In this reflection I use what is helpful and leave the rest. If my attention strays, I quietly return to my piece of nature. I take my time.

Prayer

I take the piece of nature I have selected to pray with and find a space where I can be alone and get comfortable. I do whatever helps me to become still.

I ask God to draw me into this experience with an open heart and to guide me.

I gaze on my piece of nature and let go of other things around it. I take time over this. I sense how God is gazing on me as I gaze on God's piece of nature; God's creation.

Where does my eye first focus when I look at it?

Then where does my eye travel to?

I take in the whole of the piece of nature.

I notice colours, forms, textures, patterns, light, shade, contrasts, movement ...

What words or phrases would I use to describe what I see?

What does my piece of nature smell of? Or, if I'm sitting with a photo, can I imagine a smell?

Does my piece of nature have a sound? Can I imagine a sound?

If possible, I touch it. If I can't, a memory might come to mind of touching, or being touched by, nature? I notice this memory.

I use my imagination to place myself in my piece of nature, as it were. I become different forms or parts of it and I sense where I am most comfortable.

Where do I find rest?

What is it like to 'journey' in my piece of nature?

I imagine this piece of nature can speak. I listen to it. What does it say to me?

I stay with what most 'affects' me; what most invites me.

I speak to God present in me. I try to name what is emerging. I listen to God. I rest in God's loving presence.

I gently withdraw from this prayer.

Review

After my time of prayer I reflect on my prayer, maybe over a cup of tea, using the questions below if they are helpful:

- *What is staying with me as I reflect on my prayer?*
- *What do I want to give thanks for?*
- *How am I drawn to respond to God?*
- *Might I write, draw or make something?*

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