

PRAYING YOUR DISTRACTIONS.

TURNING DISTRACTIONS INTO PRAYER.

From the book "You Can Pray" of Fr. P.Ribes, s.j. published by the Gujarat Sahitya Prakash

Note: An application of the Consciousness Examen to your Distractions

- ✓ *Often enough religious minded people worry a lot about getting distracted at prayer.*
- ✓ *By nature, our minds are fickle. God knows it and accepts us as we are.*
- ✓ *With or without distractions we have to persevere in prayer.*
- ✓ *If there is a will to fight distractions, we should not worry too much about distractions at prayer*
- ✓ *With God's help we can turn them into prayer.*

SOME POINTS ABOUT DISTRACTIONS:

There Are Two Kinds of Distractions.

First: Distractions of the Mind:

- At prayer, sometimes, we go tangentially due to association of ideas or of things that engage us, such as our studies, our occupations, news in the papers, etc.
- These distractions are normal. Human minds are unsteady and drifting.
- When we go to prayer with great interest and a genuine desire, distractions will lessen but not disappear.
- The remedy to such distractions is 'Go back to the point you were when the distraction took you off from prayer and carry on as if nothing had happened'
- It does it no matter much how many times such thing happens in your prayer time .

Second: Distractions of the Heart:

- They are symptomatic. If we reflect on them, these distractions lay bare to us our loves, our interests and priorities. **In a way they tell us what we, consciously, or unconsciously, value most in the depth of our heart.**
- **Jesus said: "Where your treasure is, your Heart will also be".**
- In other words, what we truly value, what we really love, what we long for is found in the depth of our heart.
- If we are discerning and perceptive enough, such distractions will make us aware of what we really value in our life - **where our unknown attachments are:-** be persons, ourselves, success, wealth, health, popularity, power, influence, pleasure, whatever.
- Through these distractions of the heart, God tells us **that secretly, even hidden to ourselves, we love those things more than we love Him.**
- Through such distractions we may discover our, our greed, our lust, our pride, our vanity, our hates, our unforgiveness, our unbelief, etc.
- Whenever we discover, through the "distractions of the heart", our wrong values and our attachments, **let us turn to God in prayer both in thankfulness for the discovery, and in repentance for our failure to love Him above all thing!**

METHOD OF PRAYING THE DISTRACTIONS OF THE HEART

Preparation:

- Quiet down. Pause in silence for a while.
- Place yourself in the presence of God.
- Invoke The Holy Spirit for assistance.

Reflection and personal Examination.

Concentrate on the distraction that besets you at this moment. **Listen to it.**

Ask God: “My God, what are you telling me through this distraction?”

Listen to God and Question yourself.

Is this distraction a recurring one? Does it come to me over and over again?

If it is not a recurring one, do not worry, go back to the point you were before the distraction sidetracked you, and carry on your prayer as if nothing had happened.

If it is a recurring one keep questioning yourself: :

- What does this distraction tell me about my relationship with God?
- Does it reveal to me where my true treasures are, where my heart is?
- Do all my worries, anxieties, interest and fears, underlining my distraction disclose me what my hidden values are?
- What do I long for most in life? What are my priorities?
- Do I really love God above all things? If so, why is my heart elsewhere?

Next, turn to God

- And in a loving and affectionate conversation carry on praying about your distraction.
- Ask God for light in your mind, as well as love in your heart and for strength in you will to get rid of all that keeps you away from loving Him with all your heart.

Warning

A recurring distraction of the heart coming over and over again, over a period of time should be taken seriously as a warning from God. God is likely calling your attention to your drifting away from him. Your heart is getting attached to something else than God. What is it?

Check List: What could the root be of your Distraction of the Heart?

Is it due to:

- **Fears and anxieties.** Of what? Why?
- **Hurts and resentments.** From whom? About what?
- **Irrational expectations.** What are they?
- **Assumptions.** Check their grounds.
- **Disappointments and discouragements.** Why? How? Are they justified or not?
- **Likes and dislikes.** Free yourself from societal fads and fashions. Be yourself.
- **Attachments: To things, to people, to yourself.** Don't be a slave to anything!
- **Addictions;** Gossip, Eats, Drinks, TV, Porno, Drugs, Wealth, Gambling, etc.,

- **Rejection of self or family or job, or the circumstance of your life., etc,** accept yourself, accept your people, accept things as God disposes.
- **Unforgiveness of self, of others or of God.** No rancor, , no grudges, no regrets
- **Failures, sins, guilt.** Surrender them to God. God forgives and forgets.