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Prayer of Quiet

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Prayer of Quiet

Many of us would like just a few minutes in the day when we are not thinking about whatever we might be doing next or evaluating whatever we or others have recently done. The more our need and desire, the more difficult it seems to either take the time or to somehow become quiet in our minds.

Rarely will anyone come along and suggest that we stop whatever we are doing and pause, so as to seek interior peace. Making or taking a few minutes - or many - is our responsibility, no one else's. The quiet, if and when we experience it, is mostly a gift. We can try relaxing our muscles, taking a comfortable posture, engaging in deep slow breathing and other practices that facilitate interior quiet. But the kind of stillness that deeply satisfies us is more than a result of our actions. Soul-satisfying quiet arises, not primarily from the cessation of thoughts, but because of a loving Presence: God to us, and we to God.

When people smile at us with a sincere and caring look, they do not have to say anything in order to communicate their intentions toward us. Neither does God have need to tell us "I am with you" when we open ourselves to the possibility of interior quiet. Nor are we required to say anything at the time, especially if our minds go blessedly blank with an accompanying sense of peace. This kind of prayer is at least as consoling and supportive as any of the other forms that are familiar to us. Just as talking is not the only or always the best means of communication with those around us, so also we are not limited in our relationship with God to praying with words, whether spoken, sung, or read.

Blank, peaceful minds and a state of sleep are quite similar states of being, and sometimes the two coincide. For example, when we seek to become quiet and receptive to God, but without using words or even thoughts, sometimes we become so quiet that we either fall asleep for a time, or if not really asleep, so completely unconscious that the experience is the same. In both situations, when we become again aware of our surroundings, we are as refreshed as we would be from a nap, usually with spontaneous attendant feelings of well-being, together with gratitude that is more than the usual consequence of a siesta or "time-out" that we might choose to take. The prayer of quiet is a gift, deserving both of our acceptance and our thanks.

A different but related experience might be described as "quiet in the midst of noise," such as when we are unable to stop or even slow the stream of thoughts racing through our minds. If we make the decision to turn our hearts towards God even while the internal noise continues, we might well

become aware that we are with God and God is with us, no matter what directions our thoughts are taking. This too is a prayer of quiet that is often given to those who trust that God is present, always.

Though the prayer of quiet is a gift, we can look for, ask for, and dispose ourselves to be given such experiences.