

# ***Pray as you can: not as you can't***

Dom John Chapman

***I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention....  
How to be idle and blessed...***

Mary Oliver

*Stop searching, stop travelling, and you will arrive. There is nowhere to go! Be still and see what is before your eyes. The faster you travel and the more effort you invest in travelling, the more likely you are to go astray. People ask WHERE they will find God. The answer is HERE. WHEN they will find Him. The answer is NOW. HOW they will find Him. The answer is BE SILENT and LOOK.*

Anthony de Mello

*To pray is to make the most of our perceptions. You pause on the thing that has happened, you turn it over and over like a person examining a gift, you set it in the context of past and future, you mentally draw out its possibilities, you give the moment time to reveal what is embedded in it.*

Alan Ecclestone

**When self-concern is quiet, heaven and earth  
lie open in complete generosity.**

Susan Murphy

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Philip Carter is a retired Anglican Priest. He was the inaugural president of the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD). He ran the Julian Centre in Adelaide, an independent and ecumenical centre for spirituality, from 1997-2009.

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Go for a walk. Use some or all of your five senses- sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. Relax. Go slow. Notice what is in your mind- and see if you can gently let go of the things that come to the surface. (You can, if they need to be, pick them up later). Pay attention. Let be what IS- let the sky, the sounds a tree “speak” to you. Gerard Manly Hopkins, the poet, said: “The harder you look at something, the harder it looks at you”. Trust any moment that “draws” you (as distinct from being “driven”). Savour this time.

As you come to prayer recognise the “you” who comes to this time, the many “you’s”....the you who is tired, on top of things, bored, anxious....and affirm the deeper you, the largely hidden from your sight you, who is in reality already oriented towards God, who already desires God. We are already, because we are made in the image of God, both Christologically and Paschally structured. **“Love is our identity....Love is our name”**.

So use this time to name what it is you want....maybe a felt experience of God/Jesus, God’s touch, God’s forgiveness, sorrow for sin, a deeper friendship with God, a more intimate knowledge of Jesus, a more personal experience of God’s love....

Receiving ourselves as gift is the simplest and most difficult task of all. The paradox of Christian faith is that it is only by acknowledging and accepting our poverty that we discover our worth, our true riches. As we experience our weakness and vulnerability, our emptiness and our “unknowing”, we will be, according to Jesus, blessed in this experience of poverty of spirit: for it is here that we discover that we are in the right place. This “wound” of self-knowledge is the way forward, if only we could believe it.

**“I come to wound you and to heal the wound”.**

Kevin Hart

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