

## Beginning to Pray with Personal Vocation

*...For I know well the plans I have in mind for you—oracle of the LORD—plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope. When you call me, and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me—oracle of the LORD—and I will change your lot...*

*-Jeremiah 29:11-14a*

Feel free to use your own method of praying, but if you are new to praying with Scripture the following steps and questions may be helpful:

1. Relax. Take 5 deep breaths. Become aware of God's presence.
2. Ask for the grace to listen.
3. Read the Scripture passage slowly and pay attention to what stirs within you.
4. Speak and listen to God about what is happening within, particularly about the following:
  - How do you feel when you imagine a God who desires to take care of you and to give you "plans for your welfare...a future of hope" ?
  - Consider that God trusts you fully with his plans for you...How does this unconditional trust make you feel? What does it stir within you?
  - What dreams or plans do you currently have for your life? What fears do you have about the future and what God's plans might be for you? Share these desires and fears with God. Listen for how God might be responding to you...
5. Rest in God who rests in you. Express gratitude when you finish.

After your time in prayer, spend a few minutes reflecting with God on your experience. Consider journaling briefly about the following questions: How might God have been present or responding to you during your prayer time? Did any significant feelings, thoughts, or memories emerge? Are there any ways you are being invited to move forward from this time in prayer...Is anything you are being invited to return to in prayer next time or is there a concrete way God is inviting you to explore something from prayer in your daily life?

*"Dream big--big enough for God to fulfill God's dream for you." -Sr. Peg Dolan, RSHM*

## **The Summer Day**

*Mary Oliver*

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean—

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't exactly know what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?