

The Body Prayer: Engaging your body

By Sheila Foster

When I look towards the season of Lent, I find myself focused on prayer. What is prayer? A conversation with God, sharing and listening. It's conversation that engages our hearts and minds, but it can also engage our whole body. When we pray with our entire body, we bring our whole selves into conversation with God.

Using our body in prayer is an incredibly old prayer practice. When we pray, we can pray not only with our heart and mind. We can pray as we walk and breathe, we can pray with our hands, we can pray through our creative actions. We can pray with words, with song, with movement, with what we see and hear, and without words.

Because there are so many ways to pray, prayer is going to look different for each person, in the same way that we each have our own personal relationship with God. Sharing different ways to pray helps us discover all the ways we can be in conversation and relationship with God.

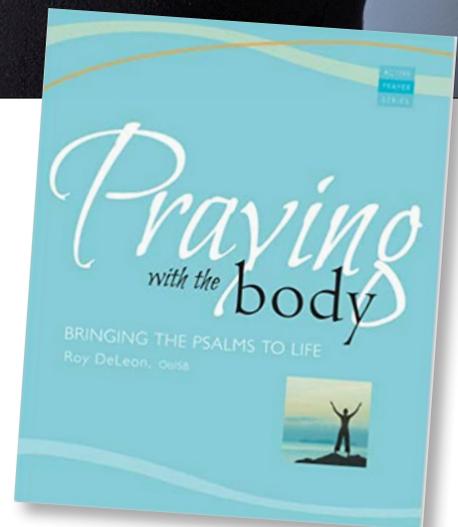
As a child of God, I offer up this Body Prayer, based on the prayer of St. Patrick, which we have used with our children and youth. As you offer this prayer, silently or aloud, move your arms and body in the directions of the words. And turn your gaze in the direction of the words. I end my prayer with wrapping my arms as I



Sydney Foster demonstrates the hug position.

give myself a hug. In the hug position, I take a moment to rest in the feeling of God with me, holding me in my struggles, challenges, hopes, and joys.

God before me
God behind me
God above me
God below me
God beside me
God all around me
God within me



Explore more in *Praying With the Body: Bringing the Psalms to Life*, by Roy DeLeon.