

As you do so, become aware of having a body ... of being alive ... of being you.

In your imagination, whether or not you see Jesus, sense his presence with you. Hear him say your name. Then listen to Jesus say:

I had a body once—an earthly body like yours. It wasn't meant to last forever. But I found blessings in having one. Your body is a blessing, too. I invite you to be grateful for the body you have.

You pause for a moment to let that sink in. Can you be grateful for having a body? Is there anything you would thank God for about having a body? If so, bring that to God now in any way you like. With gestures, words, or just by your awareness, open up to God anything for which you are grateful about your body. When it is time, Jesus speaks again:

Tell me of those things you don't like about your body and where it hurts to be you.

Go ahead. What would you like to say to Jesus about those parts of your body that you don't like—those places where you are in pain, feel embarrassed, or think you are diminished? With or without words, tell Jesus about it. Let him know what your body is like for you. After you have done so, and when you are ready, listen to Jesus's response as he says to you:

I want you to hear me when I say, "I love you as you are." You are, of course, so much more than the gifts of your body, and so much more than its wounds or imperfections. Whatever you think and feel about your body now, please know that I love you just as you are. I do. And I will be with you always and forever. Always I will be with you, loving you.

Now again become aware of being in the place you are. Notice what it sounds, smells, feels, or looks like to be there. As you do so, try to keep a sense of the presence of God with you.

Of course, some people find it easier than others to use their imaginations in this way. If that was helpful for you, I'm glad. If not, or if you fell asleep, that's okay. It is still true that your body, broken and beloved, is important and worthy of being treasured. And God truly does love you just as you are.



FIND HOMILIES, CHILDREN'S MESSAGES, AND
OTHER BOOKS & RESOURCES FROM FR. JOE
GOSPELVALUESONLINE.COM



TIM NOBLE AND SUE WEBSTER, ARTISTS

Are You Good Enough Yet?

By Fr. Joe Kempf

QUOTES FOR MEDITATION AND PRAYER

There is no perfection, only beautiful versions of brokenness. ~ Shannon L. Alder

I wish I could show you the astonishing light of your own being. ~ Hafiz

Be yourself; everyone else is already taken. ~ Oscar Wilde

It is such a great moment of liberation when you learn to forgive yourself, let the burden go, and walk out into a new path of promise and possibility. ~ John O'Donohue

I picked up the fragments of my life and put them together, all but the missing piece. ~ Kamala Markandaya

Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things. ~ Robert Brault



I don't have to try so hard.
 I am loved
 just as I am,
 more than I could ever know.

Cut this reminder out and place it somewhere you can see it. You might want to say the first line, pause to let that sink in a bit, then say the first two lines together, pausing again. Then say the first three lines together followed by a pause. Then finally say all four together.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Designate a notebook or binder as a “gratitude journal”. As you start your day, list three things that you are grateful for.
- Hold a crucifix in your hands, and let it help you imagine the crucifixion scene. Picture Jesus on the cross. As you see him there, say to him whatever you feel like saying to him.
- Take clay (or some other material) and form an image that shows something of God’s relationship with you. (Perhaps you might keep this, repeat the activity several months later, and then compare the two images).
- Find a safe place. Close your eyes, then - with eyes closed - open each of your senses one at a time: first smell; then taste; then touch; then hearing; and only then, while aware of each of the other senses, also open your eyes. With or without words, whisper a prayer.
- At the end of the day, look back and list some of the ways love was present for you during the day.

- Listen to this song:
 One by Ryan O’Neal



PAUSE 1: Things I want to remember so far... (*Don't complete #2 or #3 yet*)

PAUSE 2: OTHER things I want to remember so far...

PAUSE 3: Write down someone for whom you want to pray, and/or, an encouraging word to yourself.

.....

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND/OR GROUP DISCUSSION

- Pope John Paul I said that God is not only father, God is mother also. If you were to write a letter to God as mother, what would you say?
- Though we do not believe that God makes something bad happen in order to bring good out of it, often we can see that good has come from a death or loss. Describe any good that you have seen resulting from a suffering of yours.
- Who helps you believe in your goodness? How do they do that?
- What does the picture on the cover of this guide stir in you?

.....

GUIDED MEDITATION: OUR BODIES BROKEN AND BELOVED

I invite you to use your imagination and to bring your body, just as it is, to God. Though some use imagery more readily than others, I encourage you to try it.

For prayer, I always think it is good to find a posture that keeps us both comfortable and alert. I encourage you to place yourself in that posture now. Please don't be limited by what I suggest. If your imagination takes you elsewhere, relax into that. At one point I will suggest words that God might have for you. Please listen to what God has for you through these words—or in spite of them. If it helps to have music in the background or someone else slowly read the words while you listen, I encourage that.

This process is meant to be experienced slowly, with pauses throughout. As you bring your body to God, you can use words, or you can let there be no words.

When using imagery in prayer, some find it helps to first take a few deep breaths. Many choose to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. Try that now.

(Continued on next page)