

require me to become one of them.

I bought my aquarium to brighten a dull room, but ended up learning a few lessons about running the universe. Maintaining one requires constant effort and a precarious balancing of physical laws. Often the most gracious acts go unnoticed or even cause resentment. As for direct intervention, that is never simple, in universes large or small.

Philip Yancey is a free-lance writer in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

PRAYERS FROM THE ARK

Prayer of the Ox

Dear God, give me time.
Men are always so driven!
Make them understand
that I can never hurry.
Give me time to eat.
Give me time to plod.
Give me time to sleep.
Give me time to think.

Prayer of the Butterfly

Lord!
Where was I?
Oh yes! This flower, this sun,
thank you!
Your world is beautiful!
This scent of roses . . .
Where was I?
A drop of dew
rolls to sparkle in a lily's heart.
I have to go . . .
Where? I do not know!
The wind has painted fancies
on my wings.
Fancies . . .
Where was I?
O yes! Lord,
I had something to tell you:
Amen.

Carmen Bernos de Gasztold

MORNING PLEDGE

Some years ago I came across a most beautiful prayer. Although I do not know the name of its author, the words impressed me so much that I committed them to memory. They are my morning pledge to Jesus as I start my day. For several years I have recited it the moment I start the engine of my car, as though I could not dare to drive one inch without taking the Lord with me through the strength of this prayer. Now I repeat it even more often.

You say, how can one prayer have such an impact? Read these words, savor the meaning, and you will understand:

I will try this day to live a simple, sincere, and serene life.

Repelling promptly every thought of discontent, anxiety, impurity, and self-seeking.

Cultivating cheerfulness, magnanimity, charity, and the habit of holy silence.

Exercising economy in expenditures, generosity in giving, carefulness in conversation, diligence in appointed service, fidelity to every trust, and a childlike faith in God.

In particular I will try to be faithful to those habits of prayer, work, study, physical exercise, eating and sleep that I believe the Holy Spirit has shown me to be true.

As I cannot in my own strength do this nor even with the hope of success attempt it, I look to thee, O Lord God my Father, and ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The significance of prayer in my life transcends even the beauty of these words. As I reflect on how the Lord has worked in my life, I can only thank Him for hearing and answering my prayers. When I think of the hours I spend in prayer, the questions I ask the Lord and the concerns I present before Him, I sometimes wonder if He is not weary of listening to me. But when I see His answers revealed in such wondrous ways then I understand His words, "Ask, and it shall be given," and that He means for even me to do just that. The critical issue for me is to wait patiently on the Lord's answer and not the answer I want. His answer has always been better than anything I could anticipate, because my heavenly Father has the best answer at the best time.

Joan Fobbs

Joan Fobbs (Ph.D., Ohio State University) recently completed a five-year appointment with the University of Vermont, in Burlington, Vermont, U.S.A.