

## Welcoming Prayer

Adapted from *My Shepherd King's* summary of Father Keeting and Mary Mrozowski's work on the Welcoming prayer.

Throughout the day, we may experience negative feelings. Often our natural reaction is to try to suppress these. That doesn't usually work. With the Welcoming Prayer, when you are experiencing "bad" feelings, you don't try to pray them away but rather, you welcome them so you can accept them, release them, and move on.

There are three phases of the welcoming prayer. You might move through them directly or spend as much time as needed in any one of them. You may use this any time you are aware of difficult emotions. Now, if you can identify a negative emotion, bring that to mind.

1. **Focus and sink in.** This is about feeling the feeling, not amplifying, indulging, or justifying. Don't run away from the feeling or fight it, just experience it. Feel the emotion physically. Notice your body. Are you tense? Anxious? Hot? Fidgety? Lethargic? Just observe, don't try to alter. Stay with this until you notice both the emotional and the physical components. Journal your observations.

2. **Welcome.** Affirm the rightness and truth of where you are and acknowledge God's presence in the moment by saying: "Welcome, \_\_\_\_\_." (Insert name of emotion, such as fear, rage, etc.) Focus on the emotion, not the problem that caused it. Acceptance is not passive; instead, it establishes you in reality so that you can respond effectively.
  
3. **Let go.** Say, "God, I give you my \_\_\_\_\_." (Insert the name of your emotion.) You can turn the feeling over to God and let it go – let him hold it and have it. If you haven't truly felt and welcomed it, you may experience resistance. If this is the case, you can stay in the letting go stage, or return to the welcome stage.

"The Welcoming Prayer" (by Father Thomas Keating)

Welcome, welcome, welcome.

I welcome everything that comes to me today

Because I know it's for my healing.

I welcome all thoughts, feelings, emotions, persons,

Situations, and conditions.

I let go of my desire for power and control.

I let go of my desire for affection, esteem, approval and pleasure.

I let go of my desire for survival and security.

I let go of my desire to change any situation,

Condition, person or myself.

I open to the love and presence of God and

God's action within. Amen.

The Welcoming Prayer helps undo the false-self (fake or superficial self) and heal the wounds of a lifetime by addressing them where they are stored – in the body.