

## **A Way to God for Today**

A Video Program with  
Anthony de Mello, S.J.

#2 Peace

Prayer Guide

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video programs, please write to:

Argus Communications  
One DLM Park  
P.O. Box 7000  
Allen, Texas 75002

Argus Communications

or call our toll-free number 800-  
527-4747 (in Texas 800-442-4711).

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## PEACE

### Summary

Spiritual peace can be gained by (a) being aware of your body, (b) slowing down, (c) doing one thing at a time, (d) having an attitude of acceptance, and (e) developing a sense of perspective.

### Body-Awareness Exercise

Close your eyes. Get in touch with your body. Get the feel of the clothes on your shoulders. What do they feel like? Get the feel of the clothes on your back. Get the feel of your thighs pressing against the chair. Get the feel of your hands as they touch something or rest on something. Get the feel of your feet touching your shoes or the floor.

Repeat the exercise five or six times and then open your eyes. If you feel tension, get in touch with it. Become aware of its location and component parts and you will become relaxed. (Allow five to ten minutes for this exercise.)

### Discussion Questions

1. In this program Fr. de Mello talked about spiritual peace. Have you experienced this kind of peace? If so, what were the circumstances? How has this program

changed your ideas about peace? Do you think spiritual peace is important? Why or why not? How do you spread peace?

2. Fr. de Mello remarked that the kind of peace he described may not exclude fighting. How is this possible? What example can you think of in which peace and conflict were both present?

3. Fr. de Mello said the only thing peace excludes is a self-centered attitude. Do you agree? How does selfishness lead to the absence of peace?

4. What is soft-heartedness as described by Fr. de Mello? What acts of soft-heartedness can you think of? Did these acts promote peace? If so, how?

5. Can you say there is no rancor, no bitterness, and no hatred in your life? If not, where are these present? How can you do away with them?

6. Is there turmoil and conflict in your heart? Why? What can you do to lessen them?

7. Did you do the body-awareness exercise as it was described in the program? If so, did it make you feel relaxed? How?

8. In one of the stories told in this program, God's most trusted angels advised him to hide in the human heart because no one would think of searching for him there. What effect did this story have on you? Do you think of God as being in the human heart? What does this mean to you?

9. Fr. de Mello asserted that his body-awareness exercise will help you come home to yourself. What is your reaction to that? Will you try it regularly? Do you think it can help you? Why or why not?

10. Fr. de Mello said it is an extraordinary thing to come to the present. Why is it extraordinary? Do you consider yourself present in the way that Fr. de Mello described it? Explain, using examples.

11. What is the value of slowing down? When is slowing down necessarily opposed to speed?

12. What is the value of doing one thing at a time? Do you do one thing at a time always, sometimes, or never? Explain.

13. How do you think the exercises described in this program lead to union with God?

14. The awareness exercises will give you an attitude of acceptance. What was the last thing you peacefully accepted? Do you try to fight the things you cannot change? If so, how? What is the effect of this fighting?

15. Fr. de Mello said that the goal of the awareness exercises is to attain the attitude of acceptance and yet to be intensely involved. Do you think you can achieve this attitude? To what important things in your life would you like to apply this attitude?

16. When Jesus died he said, "My peace be with you." What is the peace that Jesus left with us? How will the exercises in this program help you gain that peace?

17. Which of the exercises described in this program did you find most interesting? Which will you try on a regular basis? What do you hope to gain from these exercises?

# Exercises for Peace

## Body Awareness

Close your eyes. Get in touch with your body. Become aware of all the sensations on the surface of your body: start at the crown of your head and keep moving down slowly until you reach the tip of your toes, omitting no part of the surface of your skin. Repeat the exercise for a full half-hour or more.

If you ever get to a point where you experience sensations over the whole surface of your body, then dwell on the awareness of your body as a whole, teeming with sensations.

## Acceptance

Say yes to everything that you find unpleasant but that you cannot change. Say yes to the unpleasant things of the past. Say yes to whatever awaits you in the future.

## Perspective

Think of some of the things you were attached to or that you feared as a child and that no longer affect you. Think of some of the things you are most at-

tached to. Say to yourself a few times slowly, "This too will pass away." Think of some of the things you dislike or fear. Say to yourself a few times slowly, "This too will pass away."

## Alternative Exercises for Busy People

### Abbreviated Body Awareness

As you are driving your car, get the feel of the steering wheel and the seat. Get in touch with your feet touching your shoes. Try to get in touch with your body.

When you walk be aware of the movement of your legs.

### Slow Down

Take one extra minute at breakfast, driving to work, and during other activities whenever you can. Observe the effect this has on you.

### Do One Thing at a Time

Verbalize internally what you are doing as you do it. This will help you to do one thing at a time.