

PRAYER COMPANION

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS SYNOD PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE SERIES

~ 2 ~

JESUS' WORDS OF INVITATION ~ "Come to me, all you who labor ..."

I prepare my heart for prayer

As I begin, I take a moment to become aware of the Lord present to me,
looking upon me with love, desiring to speak to my heart.

Prayerfully, I read Matthew 11:25-30

After prayerfully reading, I ask for a grace I desire in this time of prayer.

Using my reasoning:

- Think about what is happening in the scene; what are the action words?
- Who are the people in the scene? What is the place? What things are described?
- What words catch my attention? What does this mean to me?

Using my imagination:

- Imagining myself in the scene – am I an observer or participant? To whom am I drawn?
- Using all of my senses - what do I see? What do I hear? What do I feel, smell or taste?

Reflect on what God is saying to my heart:

- As I reflect, I use my spiritual senses to acknowledge what is transpiring in my heart - my thoughts, feelings and desires. (Acknowledge means to see, to notice, to become aware of, to name.) This is important to do, as my thoughts, feelings and desires shape my actions.
- I look for the truth the Lord is communicating to me. I ask Jesus to give me his mind and his thoughts to see with the eyes of his heart what he wants to reveal to me today. How is Jesus calling me to apply this truth to my life?

Guided Reflection

Quoted from "An Ignatian Introduction to Prayer," by Father Timothy M Gallagher, O.M.V.¹

I sense the thrill of gratitude in the heart of Jesus as he lifts up his heart to the Father whom he so loves, and by whom he knows himself so deeply loved ... that same Father who says to me, as to Jesus: You are my beloved son, my beloved daughter ...

Jesus thanks his Father that he has revealed the mysteries of the kingdom not to the self-sufficient ... but to those who feel themselves helpless, dependent on God for everything, like a small infant I ask to be such ...

I ask Jesus, the Son who knows the Father, to reveal himself, to reveal the Father to me, in this time of prayer ... that he chooses to do this in my heart ...

Now he is close to me, speaking to my heart. I hear his invitation: "Come to me ... " I share with the Lord my own desire, now, in this time of prayer. Even as I sense my heartfelt longing to "come to him," to know that my heart is close to him ... I hear him say to me, with infinite love: I want you to come close, I invite you, I call you, "Come to me ..."

"You who labor and are heavily burdened ... I will give you rest." Lord, grant me the rest that my restless heart so seeks. I embrace this invitation. I come to the Lord bringing my burdens, my heart's laboring and weariness. I hear his promise of rest, heart's rest ...

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me ... for I am gentle and lowly of heart." Two words. Lord, you are *gentle*, you are *lowly* of heart. I ponder each word ... There is no more room for fear ...

"Learn from me." I ask the Lord for this "learning" in these times of prayer ... This is the learning my heart most desires: personal learning, relational learning, learning of Jesus ... " And you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart are restless, until they rest in you" (St. Augustine). I seek the Lord, I seek his rest ...

I ask for this grace in this time of prayer:

Converse with God²

Acknowledge:

- What are the thoughts arising in my heart? I think ...

- What are the feelings arising in my heart? I feel ...

- What are the desires arising in my heart? I desire ...

Relate: I honestly relate these to God; I talk to him about them, trusting he is present and listening to me, his beloved child.

Receive:

- I listen to what the Lord wants to say to my heart, knowing his love is gratuitous and unconditional. I receive his love and consolation. I trust he longs to console me, to encourage me, to strengthen me, to heal me, to forgive me ...
- I allow him to lead me; perhaps returning to the scripture ...

Respond:

- I conclude my prayer time speaking to Jesus, God the Father, and/or the Holy Spirit as I would speak to a friend. I may also invoke the intercession of Mary and the Saints. (St. Ignatius calls this a colloquy.)
 - Praise him - give glory to God for who he is; for being all good and loving; for being my Lord and savior ...
 - Thank him - for our time together; for his word to me; for the gifts he has given me today ...
 - Ask him - for his help, grace, strength, wisdom, deeper faith ...

- Based on what God is saying to my heart, I resolve to act in the following concrete way to love God and love neighbor (which could be something small). Today I will ...

Rest in the Lord: Be still and know that I am God

Psalm 46:10

¹Gallagher, T., 2008. An Ignatian Introduction to Prayer: Scriptural Reflections According to The Spiritual Exercises. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company. ²This way to converse with God in prayer often called ARRR is taught by The Institute for Priestly Formation out of Omaha Nebraska. For more information see Father Traynor, Scott (2013) *The Parish as a School of Prayer* and Dwyer, Karen and Lawrence (2011) *WRAP Yourself in Scripture* (IPF Publications).