

PRAYER COMPANION

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS SYNOD PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE SERIES

~ 5 ~

GOD AT THE ORIGIN OF MY BEING ~ "You knit me in my mother's womb."

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 Psalm 139:1-18

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

This psalm is a prayer, words spoken from the human heart to God. I make these words my own. I say them to the God who is present to me now ...

A psalm of wonder, of marveling *at the closeness of God to me*: "You have searched me and known me!" My heart ponders this marvel, that the infinite and eternal God *knows me*, that I am important to him ...

"You know when I sit and stand; / you understand my thoughts ... Even before a word is on my tongue, / Lord, you know it all." Again this sense of marvel, that God is so intimately close to me, always, faithfully, sharing with me the hidden depths of my heart, my hopes, my struggles, my thoughts ... I invite him into my heart ...

"Behind and before you encircle me / and rest your hand upon me ..." His loving and protecting hand is always with me ... No matter where I am, "your hand will guide me, / your right hand holds me fast." You are faithfully with me, at all times, in all the places of my life ...

A psalm of wonder, of marveling now at God's eternal love, *calling me into being*: "You knit me in my mother's womb." I sense the Love that lies at the origin of my being, that gave me life, that gives me life each day, that tells me that I am valued and loved ...

My heart speaks now to the Lord: "I praise you ... / wonderful are your works." Gratitude awakens in my heart. My heart sings its wonder, its praise, to my God ...

"How precious to me are your designs, O God." Here, in my prayer, I ponder the loving designs of God. They become precious to me anew; they give me hope, a sense of the meaning of my life.

I read, I reread, the words of this Psalm, allowing God to show me their meaning ...

And now my heart replies to the Lord ...

I ask for this grace in this time of prayer:

Converse with God²

Acknowledge:

- What are the thoughts arising in my heart? I think ...
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- What are the feelings arising in my heart? I feel ...
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- What are the desires arising in my heart? I desire ...
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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 ...
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- 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 ...
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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).