

PRAYER COMPANION

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS SYNOD PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE SERIES

~ 6 ~

POTTER AND CLAY ~ "Like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand."

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 Jeremiah 18:1-6

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 have heard the Lord speak to me of his faithful love for me, calling me into being, giving a purpose to my life. Now a hope, a desire arises in my heart to respond with complete availability to God's call – like many before me, like Mary: "Behold, I am the handmaid ..."

I hear the Lord call me, as he does Jeremiah, to go down to the potter's house. I go, I see the potter seated at his work place, with his potter's wheel, with the clay he takes in his hand.

I watch him mold the clay, unmake the vessel and reshape it anew, as seems best to him. I note the total availability of the clay in his hands, ready to be shaped as he chooses.

"Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand ..."

I spend unhurried time with the potter, I watch him work, shaping, reshaping ... I let this image speak to me of God at work in my life, over the years, now, shaping, reshaping ...

I ask the grace to be available to this divine action, to place no obstacles, to be ready to be shaped as the Lord chooses, the Lord who loves me: in situations of health, of work, in relationships, in the changes and unforeseen events of my life ...

I enter deeply into the heart of Jesus, who, upon entering the world, says to the Father whom he loves: "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, / but a body you have prepared for me ... Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God ...'" (Heb 10:5-7).

"Behold, I have come to do your will, O God": these are the words that guide Jesus' entire life and mission. I offer my own will now to the Lord. I ask the grace to be more open, more like clay in the hands of the divine potter ... I too now say with Jesus: "I have come to do your will ..."

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

Psalms 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).