

PRAYER COMPANION

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS SYNOD PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE SERIES

~ 3 ~

JEREMIAH'S WORD OF HOPE ~ "I know the plans I have for you."

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 29:11-14

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 read the word of God, through the prophet Jeremiah, to his people in their time of exile.

Their hearts are heavy ... Their nation, their temple, all that was dear to them, has been destroyed, and they are reduced to a helpless group of exiles, far from their home. The present is dark; the future, too, seems without hope, and their exile continues ... My heart, too, knows such times ...

And in their hearts, in our hearts, is fear - fear that this has happened through our own fault, through our failure to love and serve the Lord as we were called to do ...

My heart too is afraid ... I too fear that I am not what I ought to be, that I fail the Lord ... Even in this time of prayer ... will I respond to the Lord?

The Lord speaks to them ... and the Lord speaks personally to my heart, here, in this moment of prayer.

"I know the plans I have for you ... plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." I feel my anxieties about the future, about what lies ahead for me, about what will happen in my spiritual life, my prayer ...

I know that my desire to grow in love is real, but I feel so weak, so helpless ... and I am afraid. But now I hear this word of the Lord to me: "I know the plans I have for you ..." I hear these words, deeply, I read them, I reread them ...

"You will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you." My heart lifts at this promise: "and I will hear you." Lord, now, today, I call upon you, I come to you, I pray to you ...

"You will seek me and find me." I speak to the Lord of my greatest desire: I seek you ... My heart opens as I hear your promise to me: and you will find me ...

"I will restore your fortunes ..." A new hope ... that my heart can truly change, can truly heal, can truly grow in love: "I will restore ..."

My heart lifts up as I hear the Lord speak these words personally to me ... offering me new hope, new trust, as I live my calling in his service, as I look to what lies ahead ...

I linger over these words, I read them, I hear the Lord speak to me. My heart responds.

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. ² This 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).