

## The Art of Centering



Mixed media painting, 2021

When working with clay, it is advised that the clay **MUST** be centered on the wheel before any shape is made. Centering demands for the artists to use their leg muscles, arms, torso, and whole self to hold the clay's wobbly nature. If the clay is not centered before pulling it up as a vase or cup or bowl, it will not only collapse but also throw itself in circles splattering clay everywhere. It is incredibly messy. Splattered clay everywhere is hard to clean up. Thus, centering demands also an awareness that it is the most important part of any shape, no matter how long it takes.

In my own journey of integrating faith, creativity and mental health, centering has taken different routes. I've collapsed 5 times in my life navigating my own mental illness, trauma and an eclectic spirituality that left me with a messy and confusing illusion of arrogant creatorship. The art of centering for me has been the grace full awareness that I am made out of clay.

I am a creature in the hands of a Creator and with my own composition of vulnerabilities and challenges with mental illness, traumas, and tendencies to control and center myself, I was led to the center through the rosary, community of loved ones, the Catholic sacraments, artmaking, and somatic awareness. We can't re-center alone.

This mixed media painting shown above, is my most honest prayer, my longing to remain here, in the hands of my maker, to be fed from Him in the Eucharist and rest the existential angst of self-efficiency. This is my prayer and my self-portrait: held in order to hold, completely dependent on my maker. The shape will continue to follow.