



“A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS”

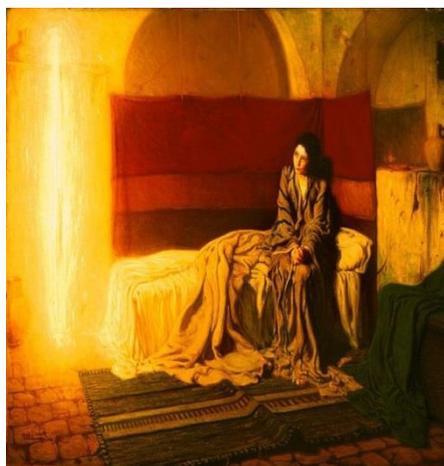
JOINING ART WITH RELIGION – THE ANGELUS

During a time when the classroom teacher taught every single lesson, (a little mind-boggling to imagine these days), one of my favorite lessons was called ‘Picture Study’. Our class would open our little blue Picture Study books to the ‘Picture of the Month’. One painting I remember most especially was *The Angelus* by Jean Francois Millet. In presenting the picture, I recall Sister pointing out to us the two peasant farmers who stopped their work in a potato field to say the evening *Angelus*. Sister then asked if we saw anything else in the painting. Finally, someone pointed out the church in the far distance. She then explained that the artist painted that detail because the church bells rang during the day at 6:00 in the morning, noon, and 6:00 in the evening to remind everyone in the village to stop and pray the *Angelus*. During our religion lesson the next day, Sister reviewed the meaning of the parts of the *Angelus* which we prayed each day around noon. Having the image of the painting in my mind and Sister’s explanation, I realized the beauty and significance of what I was praying. It made a lasting impression on this eighth grade student...a picture is worth a thousand words!



A lesson on the *Angelus* can be presented at any time, but the **Advent Season** is a beautiful time to explain it to your students. The reading for the Fourth Sunday of Advent tells the story of the Annunciation, the event from which the words of the Angelus flows. This also affords an opportunity to present to your students the beautiful painting of *The Annunciation*, by Henry Tanner which is displayed at the Philadelphia Art Museum.

Have your students take time to examine the painting. Ask them what they think the stream of light might signify. You can then guide your students in recalling the message that was given to Mary by the Angel Gabriel. Allow them time to critique this picture painted in the period of realism. How does Our Lady appear to feel hearing this message? Do they like the way the artist portrayed Our Lady? If they were painting a pictures of the Annunciation where would they have the Annunciation take place? How would they portray Our Lady and the Angel Gabriel? What expression would they put on Our Lady’s face?



By asking these questions your students will be immersing themselves in the event that changed Our Lady's life and all humanity ... "And the Word was made Flesh."

Another painting that you might like to introduce to your students is *The Annunciation* by John Collier, an American artist. Your students should recognize that this painting is from the modern era. John Collier gives an excellent explanation on a YouTube presentation (web site listed below) explaining why he decided to portray Our Lady in such a different way. He also talks about the imagery he included in his painting. After listening to the artist's explanation you might want to ask your students if they like this portrayal of Mary. Does seeing Our Lady as a young school girl impress upon them how young Mary was when she was asked to be the Mother of Our Savior? Would they have recognized this picture as the Annunciation before knowing the title?



These three paintings present a small, but beautiful tapestry, of the *Angelus* which your students can draw upon as they recite it each day. At another time you might want to look up other paintings for such prayers as the Our Father, the Hail Mary, or the Mysteries of the Rosary.

All these paintings can be found on Google images.

Listed below are some web sites that might help you with your presentation.

<https://theannunciationandvisitation.wordpress.com/2015/02/26/john-colliers-image-of-the-annunciation/> JOHN COLLIER'S EXPLANATION OF HIS PAINTING, *THE ANNUNCIATION*

<https://www.thereligionteacher.com/angelus-prayer-for-children/> LESSON ON THE ANGELUS PRAYER FOR CHILDREN/*THE RELIGION TEACHER*

<https://udayton.edu/imri/mary/a/angelus-painting-by-millet.php> *THE ANGELUS BY MILLET*

<http://catholicism.org/origin-of-the-angelus.html> VERY GOOD EXPLANATION OF THE ANGELUS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCkXS4JlcT8> VIDEO OF THE ANGELUS PRAYER

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2D8yJxYjctM> ANGELUS BELLS (You can play this video while praying the Angelus).

<http://21essays.blogspot.com/2014/12/meditation-on-henry-ossawa-tanners.html> MEDITATION ON TANNER'S PAINTING, *THE ANNUNCIATION*

<https://literarylifeline.org/2017/08/18/the-annunciation-by-henry-ossawa-tanner-1898/> ABOUT TANNER'S *THE ANNUNCIATION*

http://www.jesus-story.net/painting_annunciation.htm OTHER PAINTINGS OF THE ANNUNCIATION