

Charism Connections: Praying with Art

The **ANGELUS** prayer is intimately connected to the IHM history and charism through the story of Fr. Gillet's suggestion to Therese Renauld when she was discerning God's call to become a religious and ultimately one of the first members of the IHM congregation. Likewise, Marian devotion, so much a part of IHM spirituality, traces back to Fr. Gillet and the influence of his Alphonsian spirituality.

Art has long been a way the Church has tapped into the divine. For centuries artists and sculptors have been commissioned to add this divine life to grand cathedrals and churches. Though a painting stimulates the visual sense, there's something about a painting that somehow touches the more interior parts of us too.

The paintings cited below and the outlines provided are intended as examples that could be expanded into classroom lessons, RCIA instruction, a reflection for a ministry meeting, prayer service, etc.

1. *The Angelus* by Jean Francois Millet

- Take time to **notice**:
 - The two peasant farmers stopping their work to pray
 - The time of day
 - The feelings evoked by the painting
- Take time to **reflect** on the *Angelus Prayer*:
 - The Incarnation mysteries contained in this prayer
 - The significance of Mary's role in those mysteries
 - The way God continues to "dwell among us"
 - The meaning of the Angelus bells and the times they usually ring
- Take time to **speak** to God about:
 - Your desire for quality prayer time
 - Your availability and God's availability
 - Your beliefs and your questions surrounding the Incarnation



2. *The Annunciation* by Henry Tanner

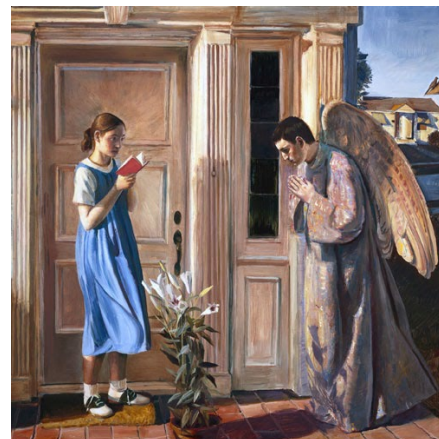
- Take time to **notice**:
 - The setting and details depicted in the painting
 - The time of day
 - The feelings evoked
- Take time to **read and reflect** on Luke 1:26-38
 - What words can I hear as I gaze at the painting?
 - How do the words and the painting convey the same Mystery?



- What words evoke questions in me?
- Take time to **speak** to God about:
 - My availability to God's calls in my own life
 - My own fears, doubts and confusion about life situations
 - My beliefs and my questions about Mary's relationship with Jesus

3. The Annunciation by John Collier

- Take time to **notice**:
 - The time era that the setting conveys
 - The contrasts between this painting and Tanner's Annunciation
 - The feelings evoked
- Take time to **read and reflect** on Luke 1:26-38
 - What words might be spoken and sound differently in gazing at this painting?
 - How do the words and the painting convey the same Mystery?
 - What words evoke questions in me?
- Take time to **speak** to God about:
 - The setting and surroundings in which God calls me
 - The fears, doubts and confusion involved in change
 - The faith and trust needed to live in this time and place



Other helpful websites:

[What Is The Angelus? | Simply Catholic](#)

[The Angelus Prayer for Children \(thereligionteacher.com\)](#) (for teachers, catechists)

[21 Essays: Meditation on Henry Ossawa Tanner's The Annunciation](#)

[Ways to Pray: Prayer through Art \(stbrendans.org\)](#)

Praying with Art (Six steps offered by Fr. Robert Gilroy, SJ, Loyola Press, 2019)

1. **QUIET:** Stop for a moment, breathe and relax. Perhaps recite a formal prayer.
2. **INTENTION:** What am I grateful for? What do I want right now?
3. **ATTENTION:** Look over the entire image. Is there a figure, shape, color, texture or word that calls your attention?
4. **NOTICE:** What feelings, thoughts, or desires do you notice? What could they reveal about God and your life?
5. **RESPOND:** Speak to God as you would one friend to another.
6. **CLOSE:** Offer a prayer or gesture as a way to end the experience.