

A 5 Step Way to Pray with Art

Before prayer

STEP ONE: Choose a work of art

- Doesn't need to be "religious" in any conventional sense
- Choose a work of art that somehow tugs you and draws you in – and that you think you can spend a prayer time with!
- Find art in books, websites (such as <https://www.metmuseum.org/>)

STEP TWO: Get to know the work of art a little

- Don't have to become an expert
- Valuable to have some background information that will deepen our understanding of the work of art and so help us to enter into it
- For example, short commentaries that accompany paintings in books and on websites

During prayer

STEP THREE: Declaration of intention

- A short, beginning prayer to articulate that you are praying with this work of art in order to express your receptivity to God's outpoured love
- A made-up prayer, or something like: "Whatever the past, or my fears of the future, here and now, O Holy Spirit, utter within me the total 'Yes' of Jesus to the Father."

STEP FOUR: Contemplate the work of art

- Look long and attentively at your chosen work of art in a spirit of openness and expectancy.
- Ask God to work in and through the work of art in order for you to receive his love in a new and deeper way.
- Listen to what the work of art evokes in you– notice any memories, associations or longings that the image stirs up within you; listen to how the image challenges you and stretches you; ultimately, listen to how the image might help you to be more possessed by God's love.
- Perhaps jot down any insights in a prayer journal.
- Don't fret if you are bored and barren! It's your sincere desire to be open to God's love that matters, not your feelings.

STEP FIVE: Prayer of thanksgiving

- Thank God for the tender, healing, transforming love that he has infallibly lavished upon you throughout the time of prayer.
- Use a prayer like the Our Father, or a made-up prayer.