**HOW TO PRAY WITH ART**

Here is another creative way to pray using a picture. You can use any kind of picture: a well-known painting, a favourite painting of yours, an icon, a picture you have done yourself, or a photograph. It can be an old master, or a modern piece, a still life, a portrait or a landscape. It might have a religious theme but it’s not necessary. It doesn’t matter at all.

So, first of all, you need to find a picture. Use the internet if you wish.

Now you’re ready to start and this is what to do.

* **BECOME QUIET**: Stop for a moment, breathe and simply relax. Perhaps say a prayer.
* **ATTENTION**: Spend some time looking over the entire image. Look carefully. Pay attention to everything that’s in the picture. Is there a particular figure, shape, colour or texture that catches your attention?
* **NOTICE:** Does the picture, or part of it, evoke any feelings, thoughts, ideas or desires? What could they reveal about God and your life? Try to work out what the picture is saying to you.
* **RESPOND:** Speak to God as you would one friend to another. Tell him what you are thinking. Ask him to speak to you, or ask for his guidance, or simply rest in his love. Perhaps make a commitment as a result of what you have discovered.
* **CLOSE:** Offer a prayer as a way to end the experience.

The aim of reflecting on a picture is to lead us into more conscious contact with God and praying in this way can inspire our faith as well as our desire to be more creative. You might like to link the painting with some text, which may include scripture or a poem that reflect on the subject of the painting. You might be inspired to produce a piece of artwork yourself as a response. Use any materials and choose any media, whatever you have to hand. You can include textiles as well as paints, crayons, pencils, photography. Or, you might choose to write a poem or a reflection if you prefer.

Just let the Holy Spirit lead you into the creative process.

There are some images on the next page which you can use if you want to, but it’s easier if you can find larger pictures.







