

RELATIONAL PRAYER: "ARRR"

Based on the teachings of *The Institute for Priestly Formation*

- PRESENCE: *Recognize **God's presence**- He is already gazing upon you with love; He desires you*
 - 1 John 4:19: "We love, because **he first loved us**."
 - St. Francis de Sales: "Begin all your prayers, whether mental or vocal, in the **presence of God**. Keep to this rule without exception and you will quickly see how helpful it will be."
 - St. Ignatius of Loyola: "I will stand for the space of an *Our Father*, a step or two before the place where I am to meditate or contemplate, and with my mind raised on high, **consider that God our Lord beholds me**."
- ACKNOWLEDGE: *Become aware of, pay attention to, notice, and name my **thoughts, feelings, and desires***
 - It is impossible to grow in relationship with another person without first coming to **some self- awareness**. One cannot grow in friendship with someone who cannot reveal their inner self: preferences, likes/dislikes, opinions, values, or beliefs. The invitation is to be "**real**" before God.
 - In order to enter into dialogue with God, we must permit ourselves to **be encountered by God** as we are, in the uniqueness of our personality in the present moment.
 - One must be so **quieted and recollected** as to perceive the movements within.
 - Lk 2:19: "But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart."
- RELATE: *Talk to **God** honestly about the thought, feeling, or desire*
 - The second fundamental relational dynamic for growing Trinitarian intimacy is to **relate** what I find in my heart to God, and to do so honestly and consistently.
 - **Tell God all about it**- the good, the bad and the ugly. Entrust what is in the heart to God.
 - 1 Peter 5:7: "Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you."
 - It is a huge **interior leap** to move from awareness of the thoughts, feelings and desires to actually relating them to God. Unrelated thoughts, feelings, and desires keep one **isolated** from God.
 - Pope Benedict XVI: "in learning how to **speak to God**, we learn how to be a **human being**, to be ourselves. To share our hearts with God is what it means to be human, to be in relation with this God who desires us."
 - Pope Francis: "Let us not be afraid of **approaching Him**! He has a **merciful heart**! If we show him our inner wounds, our inner sins, he will always forgive us. It is pure mercy. **Let us go to Jesus!**"
- RECEIVE: *Listen as God communicates Himself to us*
 - Honest and consistent acknowledging and relating of the movements of the heart will dispose the disciple to *receive* fully and generously all that God desires to give.
 - 1Cor 4:7: "What do you have that you did not receive?"
 - The **Blessed Virgin Mary** is a great model of fruitful *receptivity* because she is the first and greatest disciple of Jesus who receives everything from the heavenly Father.
 - Pope Francis: "....In prayer, we experience God's compassion that, as a Father, comes to meet his children **full of merciful love**."
 - Pope Benedict XVI: "prayer is **pure receptivity** to God's grace."
 - Fr. Jean Corbon, OP: "...the most fruitful human activity of the human person is to be 'able to **receive God**.'"
- RESPOND: *Respond to what God has communicated*
 - What we receive from God calls for a response on our part. We decide in personal freedom to cooperate with the grace that is offered to us or revert to self-will and self-reliance.
 - In the Annunciation, **the angel awaited Mary's reply**-would she accept or refuse? Mary's fiat is the response of her surrender of herself before the gift that the Father wanted to share with her.
 - Lk 1:38: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."
 - God's action on our behalf always **awaits our response**, our free cooperation. Our response is the expression of **our love for God** who has first loved us and who invites into ever deeper union.