

Clare of Assisi's Method of Contemplation

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St. Clare was a partner with St. Francis in the formation of Franciscan spirituality. In a letter to St. Agnes of Prague, Clare articulated a method of visual prayer. The four-fold pattern can be identified as **gazing, considering, contemplating, imitating**.

Clare's prayer expresses a deep mutual relationship with God through art. It begins with gazing upon the image, then moves inward to self-identity, identity, and transformation, and finally outward as we reflect God's face to the world.

Gaze: to fix one's attention in one place in a relaxed way. Rest your eyes on what you see, and let it still you. Though eyes and thoughts may be drawn elsewhere, bring them back to the image that is the focus of your prayer.

Consider: Involve your mind and your imagination. What is before you? What strikes you in what you see? What do you glimpse of God through it? Do you sense a challenge or a call? Can you give what you are feeling a name?

Contemplate: a mystical seeing, a prayer of silence, of emptying oneself of all but the Spirit of Christ. Rather than being active in your observation or trying to identify new insights, be present to what you have already thought or felt. This is a time of simply being there, present to God as God is present to you.

Imitate: Clare and Francis understood that we encounter the presence of Christ most genuinely when we live God's truth with our own lives. Praying with art, as with all prayer, moves us toward transformation. We become the one we love.

WRAP Template

Date:
Scripture Reading:
Write (Write down the key verse or verses)
Reflect (Reflect on the rule, principle or idea and record what God speaks to your mind and heart)
Apply (Write out how you can apply the message beginning today)
Pray (Praise the Lord, Pray the verse, make it your own; talk with Jesus; Ask for His grace and help to live out His Word; Pause and rest in His presence and receive His grace)