

THE AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE AND THE NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS PRESENT

# The Heart of Prayer

A Study with  
**Bishop Andrew Cozzens**

*Madonna of the Magnificent*, Botticelli / Restored Traditions

## PRAYER OF THE HEART

### SESSION 5

#### Opening Prayer

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia. The Son whom you merited to bear, alleluia, has risen as he said, alleluia. Pray for us to God, alleluia.

**V.** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

**R.** For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray. O God, who have been pleased to gladden the world by the Resurrection of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, grant, we pray, that through his Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may receive the joys of everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

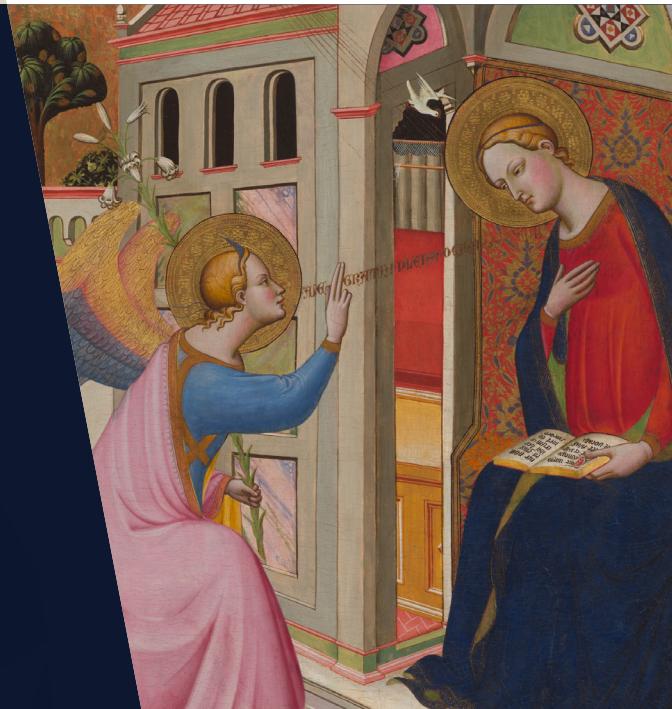
#### Study Goals

The deepest and most important movement of prayer is when we speak to the Lord, “Let it be done unto me,” or “Let your will be done”—in Latin, simply, “fiat.” Mary is the exemplar of this posture in her response to the Archangel Gabriel’s announcement that she will conceive and give birth to the Messiah.

One of the ways we can embrace this movement is through a form of prayer called ARRR—acknowledge, relate, receive, and respond. This form of prayer allows us to notice our interior affective movements, including our thoughts, feelings, and desires while relating them back to the Lord, receiving God into the deepest level of our hearts, and then responding to this gift. The simple prayer form ARRR allows us to confront struggles we may have in prayer, especially those that arise from psychological, non-spiritual desolation. We can relate difficulties to the Lord while becoming aware of interior realities that may hinder our prayer. The freedom of this prayer allows us to experience God without trying to force an emotional experience or being limited by our burdens or preconceived notions of what we believe prayer should or should not be.

## Scripture

And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I do not know man?” And the angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.” . . . And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”



*The Annunciation*, Tommaso del Mazza /  
The Getty Museum Open Content Program

## Discuss

1. Bishop Cozzens talks about sacrifice as the heart of the Christian life. What does this mean for you and your faith? Where have you experienced this to be true?
2. When we pray, we must acknowledge what is really happening inside our hearts—what do we feel and why do we feel that way? What prevents you from acknowledging and becoming aware of your disposition during prayer?
3. Do you take expectations into prayer about how you want to receive from God? What are those expectations, and how might they limit what God wishes to do in your heart?

## Memory Verse

*“We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.”*

—Romans 8:28

## Closing Prayer

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity forever.

—Luke 1:46–55



*The Visitation*, Theodor Rehbenitz /  
The Getty Museum Open Content Program

## Challenge

Use the ARRR format—acknowledge, relate, receive, and respond—for prayer this week. If possible, follow this model of prayer while in the Eucharistic Adoration chapel at your parish or in front of the tabernacle. The following format may be used to structure your prayer:

**Acknowledge (10 minutes):** Silence any devices and eliminate distractions. Spend time in quiet reflection and become aware of any interior affective movements you are experiencing. This includes thoughts, feelings, and desires. Acknowledge those movements and ask:

- What am I feeling?
- Why do I feel this?
- What is actually going on inside me?

**Relate (10 minutes):** Share what you have acknowledged with God in prayer. Express your thoughts, feelings, and reflections honestly. It may be helpful to write this prayer down or journal during this time. Invite God to reveal to you how he sees the situation.

**Receive (10 minutes):** Become still and attentive to spiritual movements in prayer. During this time, remember you cannot control how or when God will speak. Continue to relate to God in prayer, taking time to listen in silence.

**Respond (10 minutes):** This is an opportunity to enter into communion with God and accept the gift you've received in prayer. Ask yourself:

- What have I received from God in prayer today?
- Have I received a new perspective on a situation? Peace? Joy?

Express gratitude for what you've received, recognizing it was a gift from God.

# Notes

