

A Day of Quiet Contemplation

"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

-Mark 6:31



Taking a retreat is a nurturing “time-out” just for you.

It's a time to rejuvenate your mind, body and spirit; to re-connect with your authentic self; to embrace our groundedness to Mother Earth; to get quiet and spend time 'being' rather than 'doing'.

Today, allow yourself to sink into the silence. Trust your body and trust your spirit to lead you during your time removed from daily life. Sometimes, that even means taking a nap.

"The way you come to fully appreciate the infusion of the Spirit is to more and more come fully into the moment, where this moment is enough."

-Ram Dass



As you begin your day...

Let go of distractions as much as possible. Put aside your calendar, your phone, your tablet, thoughts of work and home. These will be waiting for you when you finish your retreat.

You can simply begin your day without anything in mind and let the silence be your guide, or you can set an intention for the day by gently asking yourself a few questions:

What do I hope this day will bring?

What in my life needs my attention right now?

What in my life brings me joy?

Returning home...

At some point, we must end our time of quiet rest and re-enter our daily life. Review the intentions you set at the beginning of the day. What did the day provide? Take this wisdom with you as you return home. Perhaps try to find a word or image that describes the day for you. Later, you can recall this word or image as an anchor to return you to that bit of wisdom and that sense of peace.

"There is a calmness to a life lived in gratitude, a quiet joy."

-Ralph H. Blum

Rediscover Your Spirit...

There are simple activities you can do while on retreat that may help you get in touch with your inner-spirit. Contemplative practices can sometimes help welcome the discovery of new hopes, dreams and visions for you. The following pages offer some prompts to help you start your retreat.

Don't feel like you need to do everything or anything at all during your retreat. The day is yours – to carry your heart and spirit to a place of peace.

The Voice Within

Pay attention - to your tears, to your laughter,
to your fear, to your hope, to your loneliness,
to your connectedness.

Pay attention to those key moments when you
sense yourself being more alive, more challenged,
more centered, more a part of something greater.

Spirituality, I think, is listening to our Self, and
spiritual growth is learning not to be frightened by
what we hear.

“Listening to Your Life: The Starting Place for Spiritual Growth”

by Rob Campbell, M.Div., M.A.

A Simp

It may be of use to pause throughout your retreat, returning your awareness to your breath for a moment or two. This pause can be refreshing and a tool to use when you return home.

This image shows a vertical sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. At the bottom of the page, there is a faint, light gray pencil sketch of a mountain range or hills. The sketch is simple and appears to be a background element or a watermark.

Sacred

Sit comfortably and silencing listening to a chosen piece of music or sounding.

Sacred sound meditation offers a sensation of being bathed in sound, with a warmth and love that feels nurturing and deeply moving.

Silence, too, can offer an opportunity for sacred sounding. Listen to the fullness in the silence as you spend the day. See what sounds emerge when given the space (quiet) to be heard.

My Day's Reflection...

[illegible]

Reflection

- Find a comfortable space to write using pen and paper.
- Sometimes it helps to have a starting word, question or subject as the prompt to begin writing, but it's not necessary.
- Put the pen to paper for five minutes, and write non-stop. Write whatever comes to mind.
- Don't lift your pen from the page. Don't stop to ponder or mark corrections. Do not judge or censor what you are writing. Just keep writing.
- If you find yourself stuck for something to write, just keep repeating the last word you have written, or write, "I don't know what to write" ... until a fresh thought emerges.
- Then, if nothing does come, write "the end" or something similar – and put your pen down.
- When finished, read what you have written all the way through once or twice. Then, re-read it again looking carefully to see if you can find a key word or phrase or maybe even a sentence or two that you wish to ponder and reflect upon.

- Write a letter to yourself
- Write a conversation between yourself and another person
- Write about a significant event or experience in your life
- Devote a page to someone important in your life

My Day's Reflection...

[illegible]

Meditative Reading...

Lectio Divina is an ancient method of prayer that allows us a way of listening with our heart to what our inner-wisdom desires us to say, through the contemplation of holy scripture.

Prayerful Reading (lectio)

- Relax, quiet your mind and body
- Choose a passage of scripture, or if you prefer a poem or other reading, and begin to read slowly, 'listening with the ear of the heart'

Reflection (meditatio)

- Sit with the text as you would sit and listen to a friend
- Re-read any words or phrases that catch your attention
- Pause and listen again letting the words soak in

Spontaneous Prayer (oratio)

- Speak to God from your heart, sharing honestly whether it be in pain, delight, anger, gratitude, sorrow, joy, longing...
- Whatever comes to your heart and mind is appropriate

Resting in God (contemplatio)

- Be still and at peace
- Feel God's deep and unconditional love
- Be at rest in God's presence
- Close with a prayer

We offer one reading on the back cover of this booklet should you wish to use it, or feel free to use any resources in our Light Room or the Wheaton Franciscans' Library.

My Day's Reflection...

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Visual Spiritual Expression...

Visual expressions have been used as a form of spiritual exploration in many cultures throughout history.

Visio Divina is an intentional way of praying with images. This practice invites us to explore the entirety of an image at a more contemplative pace by opening us to see all there is to see. It invites us to see deeply – past our first and second impressions – to find God within. To begin Visio Divina:

- Find a quiet place where you won't be distracted. Begin to empty your mind of any lingering thoughts and concerns by writing them down. Offer this list to God who will hold them for you while you are praying.
- Choose an image for prayer and reflection. It can be self-created, a picture from a book, a painting or even a mental image. As your prayer begins, take a few moments to open your heart and mind to God.
- When you are ready, slowly look at and notice the image, taking your time to let feelings and thoughts come to you in the form of figures, colors, lines, textures and shapes. What does it look like or remind you of? What are you drawn to? What are your initial thoughts? Whatever your initial feelings may be, simply acknowledge them without judgement. Then...
- Return to the image with an open heart and mind again, and continue to acknowledge your thoughts and feelings each time you revisit the image. What more do you see? What more do you feel? Continue to do this a few times to help you receive further insight.
- As your prayer deepens, open yourself to what the image might reveal to you. What does it and the Spirit want to make known or express to you as you attend this quiet meditation? Be aware of your feelings or thoughts evoked by the image. If you come to a corresponding feeling of peace at a point, write down any important insights or meanings, or actions your Spirit is inviting you to take.
- Finally, bring your prayer to a close by resting in God's silent grace and love.

My Day's Reflection...

[illegible]

Walkin

As you silently walk or rest along the path, where does your inner-wisdom take you?

You can begin the Peace Path outside the door of the reception area where you checked in.

My Day's Reflection...

[illegible]

Walkin

Labyrinth walking is an ancient practice used by many different faiths to facilitate prayer, meditation, and spiritual transformation. When you walk the labyrinth, the winding path becomes a metaphor for your spiritual journey. We invite you to walk our labyrinths with an open mind and open heart.

Guidelines for the walk:

- A small, simple Labyrinth is available in Tau Center. An larger outdoor Labyrinth can be found on the first floor of Marianjoy Hospital near the cafeteria.

My Day's Reflection...

[illegible]

Wisdom

Wisdom is radiant and unfading,
and she is easily discerned by those who love her,
and is found by those who seek her.
She hastens to make herself known to those who desire her.
To fix one's thought on her is perfect understanding,
and one who is vigilant on her account will soon be free from care,
because she goes about seeking those worthy of her,
and she graciously appears to them in their paths, and meets them in every thought.

For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;
because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things.
She is a breath of the power of God
and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty.
She is a reflection of eternal light,
a spotless mirror of the working of God,
and an image of divine goodness.
She is more beautiful than the sun
and excels every constellation of the stars.
She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other,
and she orders all things well.

(Wisdom 6:12-16, 7:24-26, 29, 8:1)



We hope your day was peaceful and meaningful.