



Rest In Me

Session Notes

July - October 2020

What Each Session Includes...

- We transition from the day's events with quiet discussion as everyone joins. How is God working in My Life Today?
- We Enter the Silence with a Breathing Prayer, or Chant
- Rest
- Breathe
- Center
- ... *Thoughts may come*
- Silence
- Chime
- Quiet Sharing, Followed by More Group Discussion
- Closing & Resources

Integrating Session Topics with the Practice of Silence

Specific topics with accompanying resources are prepared ahead of time for each week of the series. These are used as a secondary resources.

Because our practice is created to open our hearts to the messages of God and the Holy Spirit may bring, the quiet sharing will start with individuals sharing their experience or any topics coming up for them. This is voluntary, Anyone may speak, or pass.

Once that sharing is complete, the group will decide whether to continue on one of the topics that came up during the initial sharing, or move to the prepared topic.

Why we Start with "Love" as the first topic.

We Love Because He First Loved Us ~1 John 4:19



Teacher, which commandment is the most important?
Jesus answered:

"Love the Lord Your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself"

~Matthew 22:37-38 2



Rest In Me

Session IX “Silence Anytime”

31 August 2020

Why we Enter the Silence with a Breathing Prayer, or Chant

We will begin our experience with a breathing prayer, a chant. Our breath will connect us bodily with the divine nature of the Sacred One Being that is the source of all breath. Sacred chanting is universally honored and acknowledged in the great spiritual traditions because it moves energy out of the head, into the heart. Many people have absorbed criticism about their voices – “your voice is no good, you can’t sing on pitch” – and have learned to shut down their true voices. The same things that make us protect and cover up our true voices, and therefore also cover up our hearing are the same things that make us shut down and cover up our true self, our hearing to life, and our hearing to God...As we learn we can do it, as we are willing to work through those old messages, a whole new field of healing and reconciliation opens up for us. God is breath. All that breathes resides in the Sacred One Being. From my breath to the air we share, to the wind that blows around the planet, Sacred Unity inspires us all. *God is Spirit and His worshipers must worship in the spirit and in truth.* ~ Jn 4:24

Rest

Lie or sit comfortably for a few minutes, feet shoulder width apart, and place one hand lightly over the heart. Without trying to change anything, simply notice the breath. There are many different moments in the breath’s journey; the feeling of it as it begins to come in, when it approaches fullness, as it briefly turns over, and then, when it begins to go out, when it approaches emptiness, and when it turns over again.

Breathe

Take a few deep, slow breaths, and let all the ideas, thoughts, and conversations swirling around in your head flow out of you as you exhale. Breathe slowly and deeply and you will relax ...slowly and deeply. At each twist and turn of the breath’s journey, our bodies respond in a particular way. We may also notice a presence or absence of sensation, thought, or emotion at a particular stage. We may feel that we want to stay longer in one part of the journey than another – the beginning, the middle, or the end. Simply notice all of these sensations without judgement for a few minutes. Now without particular awareness, take 5 deep and slow breaths. This awareness is not in the mind, it is in the heart

Center

Allow your attention to be in the core of your physical body, in your heart space.

There is spaciousness here to hold all your thoughts in loving awareness and without the need for the mind to cling to them. This space is receptive of a wide spectrum of energy that is not available to what your mind alone can sense. This space has its own subtle, loving energy. where your Being is whole and you are free to be your True Self. It is from this place that we begin our Silence. This silence can be an awareness of being suspended, held, and nurtured in a field of love. It is not in the mind. It is in the heart

.....*Thoughts may come.*

If you find yourself engaged with thoughts, simply release them as soon as you notice, breathe, and return to the heart space, to the awareness of the space of love, to the space of love. In some practices, you may have many thoughts arrive, Our intellect is a gift – and this is a practice. Simply bless and release them as soon as you notice them. The same with emotions or feelings that arise.

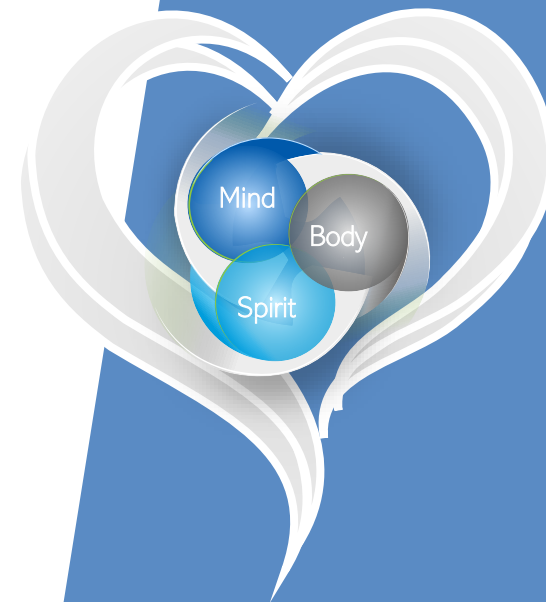
Sit

We will sit quietly for 20 minutes,

The leader will ring a chime at the end, and allow everyone to slowly come back to join the group. We will have soft discussion of topics that may have come up for us, always aware of the breath, of speaking from the heart.

Chime

At the end of 20 minutes, a soft chime will ring. Everyone will have a few minutes to slowly adjust from the quiet.



Sacred chanting is universally honored and acknowledged in the great spiritual traditions

*Seek God first.
Allow your attention to be in the core of your physical body, in your heart space, where the breath centers and connects our thoughts, physical sensations, emotions, and awareness and unites us with God*

Guidelines for Sharing after Silence

Emerging from the Silence

As each person emerges from the Silence, the leader quietly explains the next part of the session. We go around the room, one by one. If we choose, we can share a few comments about our experience, or topics that have come up for us. We do not comment on what has been shared, either as the person is sharing, or later, during discussions.

Listening

We simply listen deeply, from the heart, and do not speak. When it is our turn to speak, we try to stay connected to our heart space, and to be conscious of the energy there. We speak “from the heart.”

Sharing

Sharing moves around the room. At the end of sharing, the leader will ask the group whether they would like to discuss one of the topics that came up more deeply, or read from prepared, short readings. Content is prepared ahead of time, and the group may choose to share on the topics that came up, or on the prepared topic. If using the prepared topic

Please keep in mind...

- Participate with utmost clarity, and be mindful of the time
- Listen to others from the heart
- Accept each other completely as we are – non-judgemental
- Seek understanding, not agreement
- Maintain confidentiality and trust
- Speak from your own experience only, your lessons, or your understanding of how God or scripture are working in your life – not about ideas or theology
- Do not comment on what others have shared, give advice, or make suggestions
- Refrain from any interruptions, or from commenting directly to others when they are talking to start a conversation
- Refrain from sharing a second time, until all have had a chance to speak
- It's ok to be silent
- The leader has permission to gently remind the group if the discussion strays from these guidelines

We Love Because He First Loved Us ~1 John 4:19



Ubi caritas et amor

Deus ibi est

Where charity (caring) and love are,
There God is



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Discussion:

What Do We Learn from others trying to be in “Silence”? You are in good company...

Matthew Kelly writes²:

I love hearing stories from people who have been in the presence of great saints, like Mother Teresa or John Paul II. People say things like, “When we talked, nothing else seemed to matter to him,” or “When he talked to me, I felt like I was the only person in the world.” This ability to be really present with people is a true characteristic of holiness. And what gives the saints the ability to really “see” people? Prayer—spending time in the classroom of silence.

*Have you ever experienced what Matthew Kelly is describing with someone you know?
What was it like?*

Matthew Kelly also writes²:

Several years ago, I considered becoming a Franciscan friar, so I visited a religious order. I had never met a more joy-filled and loving community. One priest in particular was able to be so present to me that he seemed to read my soul. He truly listened and understood me. It is no coincidence, I think, that this order—though having a mission to minister to the poor—was also so focused on prayer. In addition to daily Mass, they prayed the Rosary and other prayers several times throughout the day. They spent an hour a day in Adoration, and even had a full day of silence once a week. It was in this classroom of silence that they learned to be present to God, and in turn, be present to others.

Can you imagine how or where this may help you in your own life?

1. “Best Advent Ever,” Dynamic Catholic Video, December 16, 2019.
2. Matthew Kelly, *Rediscover the Saints*, (Cleveland, OH, Dynamic Catholic, August 15, 2019)

In the “Classroom of Silence,” we discover who we are and the Father’s love for us.

When we have His love, loving others doesn’t seem like a chore, and we want to share the love we’ve received.

Sometimes I am great at being present to people, and sometimes I am terrible at it. When I realized I have failed in loving, I sit before our Lord in the Classroom of Silence

*Like Saint Francis, I simply ask Him:
Who are you Lord?
Who am I?”*

Matthew Kelly
“Best Advent Ever”
16 December

Discussion:

What Do We Learn from others trying to be in “Silence”? You are in good company...

St John of the Cross:

“It is best to learn to silence the faculties and to cause them to be still, so that God may speak”

Certainly God may speak even in the midst of noise.

Father Mark Toups shared in one of his Lenten podcasts¹:

3 things that we need to do if we're going to find God in our situations

1. Put ourselves in a position to be found...That means we have to make time for God
2. We have to put ourselves in a position to receive....That means, we need to settle down.
It can take us a little while to slow our brains down
3. Locate your heart. Locate where you are...If we're entering into prayer frustrated, or tired, or afraid
We have to be honest with where we are as we begin our time of prayer or we begin our time of conversation with God

Can you imagine how or where this may help you in your own practice?

He also said:

Moses used to talk to God as one man would talk to another (Pope Francis said this too). That's really the heart of prayer. Sharing our hearts with God, who just wants to share His heart with us.

If we're going to make it through this, if we're going to find God in disappointment, we have to be in a back and forth reciprocal relationship.

1. Michael Mayo, “St John of the Cross and Emptying Our Minds,” Catholic Answers Forums, July, 14, 2014, <https://forums.catholic.com/t/st-john-of-the-cross-and-emptying-the-mind/369035>

2. “Be Not Afraid of Silence,” youtube.com, 5:40, posted by Ascension Presents, February 27, 2020

3. Rebecca Lloyd and John Wheen, “The Sayings of the Desert Fathers and Wisdom of Today,” St Stephen’s Church, South Dulwich, January 12, 2017, <https://www.ststephensdulwich.org/2017/01/desert-fathers-wisdom-today/>

Take care to be silent.

Empty your mind.

Attend to your meditation in the fear (awe) of God, whether you are resting, or at work.

If you do this, you will not fear the attack of demons.

The Desert Fathers³
~ 313 A.D.

Discussion:

What Do We Learn from others trying to be in “Silence”? You are in good company...

From Father Mark Toups...in a 2012 Advent video

Mary, as a native of Nazareth, would have had an inner disposition reflective of the village in which she grew up.

The outer *pace* of Nazareth helped create an inner *pace* within Mary.

The secular Christmas season we find ourselves in is anything but small, simple, and slow. In fact, for many of us, the *pace* of life quickens as Christmas nears. There are presents to buy, parties to attend, and holidays to plan.

As the world around us accelerates into a frenzy, Advent actually invites us to slow down. Just as Nazareth's *pace* formed the *Theotokos*, Mary wants to slow us down so that we can receive as she did.

Slow down. Get quiet. Listen. After all, what's the rush?

What are we really preparing for?

FOR YOUR PRAYER

"Father, regardless of how busy my life is on the outside, I pray that You will help me slow down on the inside"

Can we imagine how this may help us?

Can we imagine how this may help those around us?

What might change in our perception of the world around us?

In the "Classroom of Silence," we discover who we are and the Father's love for us.

When we have His love, loving others doesn't seem like a chore, and we want to share the love we've received.

Sometimes I am great at being present to people, and sometimes I am terrible at it. When I realized I have failed in loving, I sit before our Lord in the Classroom of Silence

Like Saint Francis, I simply ask Him:
Who are you Lord?
Who am I?"

Matthew Kelly
"Best Advent Ever"

16 December

1. Original Video no longer available. Similar content available through a) "Be Not Afraid of Silence," youtube.com, 5:40, posted by Ascension Presents, February 27, 2020 and b) Father Mark Toups, "How to Pray Lectio Divina – Part 4 (Contemplatio)," youtube.com, 6:14m, April 1, 2015.

2. Matthew Kelly, *Rediscover the Saints*, (Cleveland, OH, Dynamic Catholic, August 15, 2019)

7 September 2020

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Responsorial Psalm

PS 95: 1-2, 6-9

R. (8) **If today you hear his voice,
harden not your hearts.**

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
let us acclaim the rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with
thanksgiving;

let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

R. **If today you hear his voice,
harden not your hearts.**

Come, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.
For he is our God,
and we are the people he shepherds, the
flock he guides.

R. **If today you hear his voice, harden not
your hearts.**

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:
“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as in the day of Massah in the desert,
Where your fathers tempted me;
they tested me though they had seen my
works.”

R. **If today you hear his voice, harden not
your hearts.**

Reading EZ 37: 7-9

Thus says the LORD: You, son of man, I have appointed watchman for the house of Israel; when you hear me say anything, you shall warn them for me. If I tell the wicked, “O wicked one, you shall surely die, ”and you do not speak out to dissuade the wicked from his way, the wicked shall die for his guilt, but I will hold you responsible for his death. But if you warn the wicked, trying to turn him from his way, and he refuses to turn from his way, he shall die for his guilt, but you shall save yourself.

Reading_ROM 13: 8-10

Brothers and sisters: Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet, ” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.

Alleluia 2 COR 5:19

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ
and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

Gospel MT 18:15-20

Jesus said to his disciples: “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that ‘every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector. Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, amen, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”