

Online Day of Retreat

Preparing for your day

These pages make some suggestions. Please use what is helpful.

First, ask for grace to approach this day as a gift

... A gift from God¹ who longs to spend time with you

... A gift from God¹ who invites each of us to take time out of the 'everyday', even when that time must be spent at home.

¹The Divine, the Creator, your deepest self, the Universe....Please use whatever terminology is familiar and / or helpful.



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How to make space and time:

- inform others in your household of your intentions for this day in advance, to minimise disruption
- disruptions that arise beyond your control can be welcomed as 'visitors'!
- if possible, create a 'sacred space' for the day, such as a particular room or chair, the garden, your daily walk
- remove unnecessary distractions. You may need a device to access materials; you may want books, music and creative materials to resource your quiet. Think about this in advance. Try to be intentional about what *is* and what *is not* in your space
- in considering what resources you might use, do not be overly ambitious
- decide on the times you will attempt silence / quiet and how long those will be. Try to be gentle and generous with yourself about this. (There are some suggestions for using silences at the end.)
- stick to these times, insofar as you are able.



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Dividing up the day:

- we usually think about Days of Retreat in fixed periods²
- begin each one with an intentional time of settling into the presence of God¹
- .. and ask the Holy Spirit for an open heart that can receive what you need
- when ready, move into prayer or meditation using whatever method you find most helpful
- if you don't have a chosen method, don't worry. Do feel free to ask the leader for ideas
- take your time - try not to be too prescriptive - give the Holy Spirit freedom to rest with, on and in you
- if you wish, journal, paint, draw etc, as you find helpful
- spend time towards the end of each period reviewing what was helpful and what was not
- do not judge or critique, just notice and ask for the grace to hear what is being said through this.

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²A period is part of the day, incorporating some silence: e.g.one Day of Retreat 'period' is between the introduction and midday prayers; another is from midday prayers to closing prayers.



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Days of Retreat are always facilitated by 2 recognised Spiritual Accompaniers, they are trained in listening to another's spiritual journey.

Longer periods of silence sometimes allow things to surface which may be helped by speaking with someone, or you may just feel 'stuck'.

Should you find it helpful to speak with someone during the day, please text the mobile number you will have been given. You will be called back to arrange either a phone or videocall conversation at one of the following times:

10.00hrs, 11.00hrs, 13.00hrs, 14.00hrs, 15.00hrs



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Suggestions for how to use a time of silence:

1. **Do nothing** at all...sit, kneel or lie down...and wait for God¹ to lead, to speak, to put ideas, thoughts and prayers into your mind. Relax and rest. If doing absolutely nothing is very difficult for you, do something creative with your hands
2. Use something to **spark off** prayer or reflection (try using any suggestions offered by the facilitator, the Bible, a hymn-book, another spiritual text, phrases, affirmations, short prayers). Stick to something short and dwell on it rather than 'reading' it. Use books *about* prayer or meditation, or a book *of* these, always being prepared to stop and be silent or pray
3. **Walk** - in the garden or a familiar route - thinking, taking no notice of anyone else, being aware of God¹
4. **Stay** in the sacred space and make time for your usual prayers or meditation, if part of your routine: today, you have more time for these!

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More suggestions for a time of silence:

1. Make time to **pray for / contemplate others** ... a few people or only one. It is better not to be overly ambitious! Bring these into the space, inviting them to share the gifts of your quiet
2. **Face up to yourself** and your needs, knowing these can be dealt with, given time and space. Do not dwell only on the *need for* but also on the *receiving of* help
3. A very practical and active use of the time could be to **think deliberately about your present prayer / meditation** methods and practices, if you have them (including public practices, for example, at church). Plan how to change these, how to start afresh ... write down ideas. If the present pattern is unsatisfactory, now is your chance to do something about it. Remember, you can make a plan and then find you cannot keep to it: this is fine
4. If you 'fail', **do not feel guilty** for how you use this time. If none of these suggestions appeals to you and you don't find better ones, nothing is wasted. Perhaps talk to someone about it later.



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Thank you for being with us today!

Some materials adapted from Retreat Association leaflet *How To Plan a Quiet Day*, http://www.retreats.org.uk/documents/leaflets/15_How_to_plan_a_quiet_day.pdf

