

A Mini Retreat

Take time with all this...

To begin with:



Be in a comfortable position that enables you to be relaxed and yet alert.

Look around the room and really try to see it anew for the first time - the objects, light, colours, things that have meaning for you - and be thankful. Seek the peace within it.

Scan the body and be aware of the gentle breath. Gently breathe out anything that is worrying you, any fears, anxieties...the breath is a friend and can help you to be calm and peaceful. Breathe in the peace of God - you may wish to gently and attentively repeat the word 'peace' as a prayer word, (which can also give the mind something to be occupied with).

Feel comforted and loved by God. Be surrounded by the energy and beauty of the divine.

Awareness:

Be aware of the gift of time to be still and be in prayer - and the great gift of the inner world and faith - prayer as potentially a place of consolation, restoration, perspective, peace.

Be aware of the 100s of Desert Mothers who spent many weeks, months, years in silence and solitude. Be aware of their strength, wisdom and determination.

NB Recommended book to read: *Forgotten Desert Mothers* by Laura Swan.

Laura Swan raises various questions:

How do we best cultivate a quiet inner spirit?

Do we attend to what feeds and expands our soul?

What helps us focus on God?

Where is our sacred space?

Have we made a cell in our home, at the ocean, or in our favourite park?

It is that place where we are away and alone.

Consider these questions. Maybe use art, poetry, craft... to help you explore the questions.

Read and contemplate these words from a Desert Mother:

In the beginning there are a great many battles and a good deal of suffering for those who are advancing towards God and afterwards, ineffable joy. It is like those who wish to light a fire; at first they are choked by the smoke and cry, and by this means obtain what they seek ... so we must also kindle the divine fire in ourselves through tears and hard work. (Amma Syncletica)

Treat yourself to a coffee or herbal tea!

Lectio Divina (divine reading):

³⁵ That day when evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious storm came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" ³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. (Mark 4:35-41)

Slowly read the text at least 3 times and let the Holy Spirit lead you to a word or a phrase that is making itself now to you - then soak it up, sit with it, savour it, stay on it for a while.

What wisdom is emerging?

Find yourself one of your favourite pieces of music and just enjoy it!

To finish, perhaps a gentle Examen:

Cast your eye over the time you've spent in prayer and reflection - let the Holy Spirit guide you... What are you noticing? What has been the centre of the prayer for you? What can you give thanks for?

Recommended reading - *Finding Your Hidden Treasure* by Benignus O'Rourke