

FOR SOME OF YOU, this silent “[contemplative prayer](#)” may be a new experience of prayer. We offer you a few suggestions that will facilitate your practice.

- ❖ In many ways, silence is not so much about not talking, as providing the space for you to listen to what you hear within. “*Silence is not just the absence of words, it is a fullness of Presence*” (Trappist priest, Thomas Merton, OCSO, 1915-1968).
- ❖ As soon as you want to choose silence, one of the first things you will notice is your heightened sensitivity to noise. We live with all kinds of natural sounds. On your journey to the place of stillness within, we ask you to simply acknowledge the noises and sounds you hear. Let it be. Move on to simply enjoy a greater inner freedom. “Let distracting thoughts come and let them go” as if they were simply boats passing down the river. Stay with your intention to **Be Still**. In time, these noises and mental distractions will fade from your awareness to an almost not noticing them.
- ❖ You are encouraged first of all to listen to your body. We often arrive at our prayer time from a busy schedule and/or from the family/community’s energy. It takes a little while to slow down both the mind and the body. Listen to your body. A rested, relaxed body is much more available to listen to God.
- ❖ To slow the mind, it is helpful to use your senses. Most of us do considerable ‘work’ with our minds often neglecting to pay attention to the five senses – seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching. When you find yourself obsessing about something, just be gentle with yourself and bring your attention back to the present moment using one of your senses. For example, try one of the following: breathe mindfully; light a candle; burn incense; [Gaze at Jesus in the monstrance](#); repeat this mantra a few times: **“Be still. Know that I am God.”** Listen.
- ❖ To allow your mind some leisure rest, we hope that you will choose to limit the amount of time you spend each day using your cell phones, computers, radios, televisions. You will, with time and faithful practice, go from busy mind to quiet mind, and possibly even to still mind! Still minds “*hear the voice of God*” whispering directions from within their soul. Seek out this solitude.
- ❖ We encourage you to trust how you are being led. Your life journey will open up naturally for you as you listen to what is inviting your attention. God already calls you “Beloved.” Praying with others strengthens your practice. Be patient.