

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



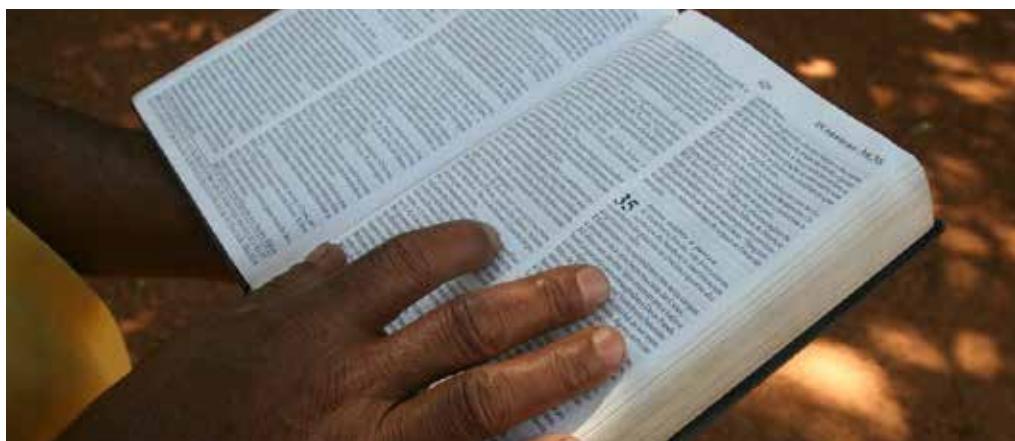
The word ‘meditation’ conjures a number of images in the mind. From old men with long beards sitting cross-legged chanting, to members of the Hare Krishna movement singing a mantra. Often meditation is understood as an activity of adherents of many such religions as Buddhism and Hinduism. Yet, in the Christian tradition, meditation has long been part of the religious experience of the followers of Jesus. The Sacred Scriptures speak of Jesus going off to a remote place to be alone with His Father. Such moments were necessary to keep Jesus focused on the divine mission given Him by the Father. For the devout Christian, frequent meditation keeps one focused on the importance of following Christ by our deeds and words. Meditation is actually easier than many people expect. It is essential to the life of the believer.

CALLED TO SERVE ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY Vocation Newsletter

Article 2705 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of mediation in these words: “Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking. The required attentiveness is difficult to sustain. We are usually helped by books, and Christians do not want for them: the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the Gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts of the day or season, writings of the spiritual fathers, works of spirituality, the great book of creation, and that of history the page on which the “today” of God is

written.” Meditation is a quest to deeply understand one’s life within the divine life of the Holy Trinity. With understanding one can respond more readily to the divine call and the union between the believer and God is strengthened.

Meditation has been a tool of the spiritual life for as long as the Church has existed. Such spiritual classics as The Imitation of Christ, The Practice of the Presence of God, Abandonment to Divine Providence, The Interior Castle, The Confessions of St. Augustine and The Introduction to the Devout Life, to name a few, are all meditations on the spiritual life. These classics and others explore the relationship between God and the believer in a meditative manner. The great spiritual masters of our Catholic faith teach that Christian meditation uses the Scriptures, a spiritual book, or even nature itself as the catalyst for meditation. In our Servite tradition, Blessed Mary Magdalen Starace, OSM, writes that meditation and mental prayer is a “school where there is only one Teacher, Jesus. He teaches everyone without charge, giving lessons of infinite





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follow



wisdom, because he longs to infuse his disciples with truth, charity and holiness. He loves them with a great and ineffable love. So let us turn to mental prayer (meditation), so that we may learn to love God the way Jesus loves God; let us strive, like Jesus, to achieve the glory of His name and win souls for Him." Meditation is a school where we can learn the truth of faith to order life in the direction of living as faithful disciples of Jesus. Part of the school of mediation is to prayerfully ask the Lord to teach us how to quiet life's many noises that His voice can be clearly heard. Likewise, praying for the courage to live as Jesus's teaches is important as well. The difficult part of meditation is starting.

Christian meditation is focused on Christ. The object of meditation is to understand the movement of God and to clearly hear His call for our lives. If you have not engaged in mediation, here is a way to begin. You will need to find time, 10-15 minutes. Turn off all electronic devices and schedule this time on your calendar as "not to be disturbed." Next find a quiet place where you can be alone with the Lord. Having a cross or a picture of Jesus in the space can be helpful as well. Then, grab your Bible. Open the Bible to Psalm 139. Now you are ready to begin meditation.

1. Begin to quiet down. Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you in this moment, to keep you focused in this meditation, and not be afraid of silence.
2. Prayerfully welcome the Lord into your space and heart. Invite Him to

share this time and space with you. If you are feeling anxious, nervous, or whatever, ask Jesus to take these from you and give you peace.

3. Slowly and out loud, read Psalm 139, stopping at any word or phrase that catches your attention. Write down the word or phrase.
4. Looking at the word or phrase, ask yourself: why is this word/phrase important to me/to my life today? What meaning does this word/phrase have for my life today? Quietly think about these questions for a few moments/minutes. Write down your thoughts as you ponder the word/phrase. Ask Jesus why He has given you this word/phrase. Write down His response.
5. Reread Psalm 139 for any additional insight and note these.
6. Taking your word/phrase, use this as prayer to Jesus. Thank Him for the word/phrase and pray for the courage to follow Him more closely.
7. Pray the Our Father slowly to end the meditation period.
8. Journal the experience noting the word/phrase, and any feelings or thoughts that arose during the meditation.

This simple way of meditating can be used with Scripture or a spiritual book. The goal of meditating is to better understand the movement of the Lord in life and to clearly hear His call for one's life.

Know that we Servites are praying for you in your discernment. God bless.



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