

## Meditation – some suggestions...

As we begin the process of parish amalgamation, we are inviting you to find some time to be still and listen for God's voice within you. Creating a new shared identity will ask everyone to draw on all of their senses and ways of knowing. For many of us, the busyness of our normal daily lives leaves little room for the time and patience discernment requires. If you are new to meditation – or just wish to refresh your practice – here are a few tips and resources that you may find helpful.

### A few tips...

Getting started is easy. You only need set aside 10 or 15 minutes in a quiet place where you won't be interrupted or distracted, sit in a comfortable chair with feet firmly on the floor, and relax your body. A few gentle slow deep breaths in and out can help you relax further and settle comfortably.

Then you might like to choose a simple focus for your attention. You might focus on your breathing (following your breath in and out, like waves in the ocean), or on the sounds around you (noticing the sounds without getting caught up in the 'stories' they represent), or repeating a simple prayer that is meaningful to you. Simply sitting still in awareness is fine too.

Much of hearing God's voice begins with noticing. It begins with naming the reality that life is busy and full and that there are many distractions and voices in our lives.<sup>1</sup> And even if we spend time in silence and quiet without thinking much, just being there enacts our belief that God lives, truly loves us, and is mysteriously capable of intervening, that he does not abandon us.<sup>2</sup>

The point of meditation is not to achieve anything but simply to be fully present in the moment, aware of whatever arises. When your mind races off (as minds do!) into stories, memories, plans, feelings or emotions, just notice this and gently bring yourself back to your meditation focus and begin again. Keep beginning again. This is what meditation is about.

You may notice that as you sit still, your thoughts and worries start to settle a little, your body softens, your heart opens, or you might feel a sense of ease, relaxation, and joy in experiencing this still, quiet, moment of being fully present.

Sometimes difficult thoughts or feelings may arise – this is ok too, just keep breathing, or listening, or praying, or just being, and these thoughts and feelings will pass in their own time, like clouds in the sky. Meditation is about being aware and awake in the present moment, and in that moment, deep peace and joy are possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from "[Hearing God's Voice in the Busyness](#)" by Becky Eldredge

<sup>2</sup> Excerpted from [Always Discerning](#) by Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ

## Some Meditation Resources

There are many mindfulness meditation resources including videos, books and apps.

- A good, short video/audio is "[Settling with Ease](#)" by meditation teacher Oren Jay Sofer
- The free mobile phone app 'Insight Timer' has many guided meditations of varying lengths, music for meditation and sleep, as well as a timer which gently tells you when 10 minutes (or your choice of time) is up with a bell.

There are some excellent and wise meditation teachers on this app, such as Oren Jay Sofer, Jack Kornfield, Tara Brach, Sharon Salzberg, Martine Batchelor and others who all provide short, guided meditations suitable for anyone who is interested in practising and learning about meditation in daily life.

- You might be familiar with praying the Rosary and this is also an excellent focus of meditation.

If you have found other resources that are helpful, please pass on the details to your parish secretary so they can be added to the list.

