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# Preparing Yourself and Your Home for a Virtual Retreat

## Commit to being on retreat

Even though the retreat is online and you are in your home space, we ask you to commit in a similar way that you would to an in-person retreat. It is necessary to commit for the whole retreat schedule and to attend every session. This is so you may receive what God intends for you during this special, sacred time! To get the most out of the retreat insofar as practically possible try to maintain “noble silence” throughout the retreat.

## Silencing Your Mind

- Switch off all electronic devices that are not needed for the retreat itself. Immersing yourselves in silence is an important aspect of deepening your meditation while on retreat. The online retreat format is also an opportunity to practice using technology in a different way: to develop your sense of contemplation, peace, and reflection. This means unplugging or turning off your computer, television, and phones, except when needed for the online content... and avoiding internet browsing, email, unnecessary messaging, reading the news, etc.
- Avoid multi-tasking while attending the virtual retreat. Plan to NOT do emails, NOT make phone calls, do only MINIMAL housework, etc.
- Don't socialize with other participants, family members, friends, etc. It is best to let all know you are not available during the specified time, just as you would if attending the retreat in person.

## Silencing your Surroundings

Here are some guidelines to help you create a sanctuary of silence in your own home — some do's and don'ts that we hope will help you prepare effectively for your virtual retreat:

- Ideally you should find a space where you can be alone in your home. Strive to create a space where you are not in contact with others or where interaction is minimized. (*For example, for multi-day retreats, is there a spare bedroom where you can sleep alone?*)
- Avoid doing any unnecessary errands or driving around. Obviously if you need to quickly pick up something or interact with a family member, you can do that—but try hard to keep it to a minimum. The point of your retreat is that you're not participating in your secular life during this time at all. You are giving your life totally to God during this time.
- Plan your food in advance and plan your mealtimes to coincide with the schedule of the online retreat. Perhaps you can cook in advance and freeze some meals that you can easily reheat. Perhaps a friend would be willing to drop off a meal at your door once or twice during the retreat. Keep it all simple, doable and wholesome. With some advance planning, food does not have to be a big distraction.
- Clean and prepare your space just prior to the beginning of the retreat to avoid being distracted by your environment. It's important to keep the space clear and clean for the duration of the retreat.
- If you don't already have one, prepare a sacred meditation space as well as an altar for the retreat. Fresh flowers can also help create the “right” atmosphere.

We hope this helps you with some ideas and guidelines for ways to prepare yourself and your home for a fruitful virtual retreat. We hope offering this virtual retreat experience will have enormous sacred potential that will support everyone deeply as we meet the challenges and opportunities of this unique and often difficult time in human history.