

Learning to be Still



A Sound of Sheer Silence

Awareness of sound

Becoming aware of the sounds around us helps us to be aware of the silence within us. Block your ears with your thumbs, and cover your eyes with the palms of our hands... Listen to the sound of your breathing. Take ten full breaths, then keeping your eyes closed, remove your hands and lay in them gently in your lap...

Now listen to the sounds around you... attend to the smallest sounds... one sound is often made up of different sounds, notice these nuances... now become aware not so much of the sounds, but of the act of hearing... Notice how you feel. Thankfulness... praise ... joy... love... frustration even, because perhaps you do not hear as well as you once did...

Now reflect that each sound is produced and sustained by God..., God is sounding all around you..., rest in this world of sounds... be aware of the silence within you...rest in the silence within you ... rest in God.



Some words to read slowly and savour in the silence

There was a great wind, ...
but the Lord was not in the wind;
and after the wind an earthquake,
but the Lord was not in the earthquake; ...
and after the earthquake a fire,
but the Lord was not in the fire; ...
and after the fire ...
a sound of sheer silence.

1 Kings 19.11, 12

For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.
He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress;
I shall never be shaken.
For God alone my soul waits in silence,
for my hope is from him.

Psalm 62.1-2,5

Then the spirit was blowing,
and darkness and silence embraced everything;
the sound of human voices was not yet there.

2 Esdras 6.39

I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.

Psalm 131.3

When you pray, be like the mountain
in stillness, in silence;
thoughts rooted in eternity.
Do nothing; just sit, just be;
and you will harvest the fruit of your prayer

St Seraphim of Sarov



Prayer

I desire to be all silence,
all adoration,
to penetrate ever deeper and deeper into God,
and to be so filled with God
that I may by my prayer
give him to those who do not know him.

Elizabeth of the Trinity