

Learning to be Still



Coming to our Senses

An Awareness Walk

There are several ways of doing this, all of which help us to be aware of the presence of God in the present moment.

Focus on all senses. Focus on one sense during your walk, maybe repeating it on a different occasion concentrating on a different sense. Repeat the walk at different seasons of the year or at intervals as the season develops.

This may simply be a walk around the garden or the park or around the neighbourhood or it might be a walk in the countryside or at the seaside. Don't write off urban walks, they can be just as enriching. Wherever you walk, notice your feelings and walk with a sense of thankfulness.

As you begin, stop, take time to become aware of your surroundings, and to become centred, to move from the head to the "heart".

Seeing: as you walk take time to pause and look around. Take in the whole scene, notice your feelings as you do so.

Now focus on an object close by, and really look at it – pick it up if practical, examine it in minute detail. Notice the structure of the object (perhaps you have chosen a leaf or flower), wonder at it.

Hearing: stop, and stand still or find somewhere to sit if possible. Close your eyes and focus on the sounds around you, those in the distance, those nearer to you. Try to distinguish the difference in individual sounds. Move on, and notice the absence of sound in some places or the differences as you progress through different areas. A hedgerow will have different sounds from a shady bank.

Touching: use your fingers to touch things, notice the different textures of bark on trees, leaves, plants, stones, walls. If it is sensible you might like to consider walking barefoot and feeling the earth or ground under your feet.

Smelling: as you walk notice the different smells around you – are they fragrant or pungent or evocative? As you did with your sense of hearing, stop and close your eyes and become aware of the different scents around you. Try to distinguish each one and take time to savour it.

Tasting: this is probably the most difficult. You may be able to find something that you can taste safely! If so, notice the flavour, is it sweet or bitter or sour.

It may be that as you walk, words or phrases well up from deep inside you. If this happens, savour these too. Afterwards you may like to note down anything significant, any insights that you have received in a journal. Or you may like to take with you something that has caught your attention, which will remind you of your walk.

O taste and see that the Lord is good;
Psalm 34.8



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

