30 Acts of Contemplation

In Celebration of 30 Years of Light!

"There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it."

– Edith Wharton

As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, Eremos invites you to join us in shining more light by exploring these 30 *Acts of Contemplation*.

1. **Explore the Gift of Silence.** Pause for five minutes of silent reflection each day. No need to control the mind's chatter. Just sit, walk or rest quietly in silence.
2. **Try Walking Meditation.** Find a quiet path outdoors or even an empty hallway to walk very, very slowly, attentive to every step.
3. **Make the Ordinary Sacred.** *Pay attention* to the detail of the experience of brushing your teeth and more. Let gratitude rise as you attend to these tasks.
4. **Pray the Hours.** Explore how monasteries pray *the liturgy of the hours* and practice your own version for a week or more.
5. **Immerse Yourself in One Poem for One Week.** Select a new poem each week and ponder it daily, observing how you experience it differently from day to day.
6. **Bless and Attend to Your Sacred Body.** Set aside time to give your body the care it needs and offer words of gratitude for all you're still able to do with your amazing body.
7. **Listen to the Birds.** Sit by a window or walk outside with the intention of listening to bird song. If that's not possible, find a video that plays the healing sounds of birds singing.
8. **Explore a Daily Review or Examen.** Inspired by The Daily Examen from Ignatius Loyola in his *Spiritual Exercises*, create a new habit of thoughtfully reflecting on the day.
9. **Adopt Creative Practices as Spiritual Practice.** Set a timer for 20-60 minutes, then *play with single-minded focus* – without attachment to what you create. Notice how you feel after you're done.
10. **Embrace the Power of Music.** Create a few playlists that feature songs that sooth your spirit in times of turmoil and remind you you're not alone, or that celebrate the "joyful noise" of hope, love, and possibilities.
11. **Visit a Labyrinth.** Walk it with an intention, listening for the wisdom of the Divine, and trusting what you need will reveal itself to you at the divine right time.
12. **Try Journaling Daily.** From a conversation with God to l*et-me -get-this-off-my chest*, try a writing practice that supports you.
13. **Bear Witness to It.** Pick something challenging happening in the world right now and bear witness to it. *Without trying to fix or change what's unfolding*, simply acknowledge that you see the suffering.
14. **Create a Home Altar.** Using natural objects, candles, images, or prayers that remind you of your connection to the Holy One, set aside time each day to simply sit at the altar.
15. **Explore a Sacred Text**. Immerse yourself in the wisdom of a sacred passage or poem through reading, speaking, or listening to it three times, followed by time to meditate and journal about it.

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16. **Give the Gift of Deep Listening**. Without trying to solve a problem or share an opinion, invite a friend or loved one to respond to the question, *"How are you…really?"*
17. **Experience a Retreat**. Plan your own or sign up for one that stretches you to truly step away from daily life for a day or longer.
18. **Practice Mindful Eating.** Turn off all distractions, use all your senses, and increase your awareness of each bite.
19. **Keep a Gratitude Journal.** Let this practice help you notice all the good things in life, both big and small.
20. **Help Grow Something.** Plant a tree, grow some herbs, or bring the beauty of flowers to life by watering and attending them.
21. **Embark upon a *Prayerful Fast*** from news, food, social media or whatever most distracts you when you attempt to sit with God.
22. **Strengthen a Connection.** Reach out to someone you wish to explore the possibility of a renewed or stronger friendship.
23. **Try a New Form of Meditation.** From *Mindfulness Meditation* to *The Welcoming Prayer* practice, there are many ways to become present to what's here now.
24. **Give Yourself a Technology Fast**. Most of us are now attached to our phones. Put it away for an hour, a day, or even a weekend.
25. **Be Blessed by Nature.** Find a special tree, creek, or patch of grass to sit quietly by and be still. Let it soothe and refresh you.
26. **Let Your Gaze Be Captured.** Experience a bit of *contemplative photography* by letting the light, color, or texture of an object reveal itself to you through the lens of your camera.
27. **Go Big**. Soften and widen your gaze to practice taking in a broader view (versus our tendency to narrow our focus and miss some of the beauty all around us).
28. **Zoom In**. Imagine you have a magnifying glass and gaze attentively at one object only. What does it reveal to you?
29. **Listen to Your Heart.** Take a deep breath, place your hand on your heart, close your eyes, offer gratitude to your heart, then listen to whatever it might have to share with you.
30. **Just Pause**. Even one minute of pausing to deepen your breath and remember your connection to the Divine makes a difference.

ABOUT CONTEMPLATION

To be contemplative is to enter a quiet space inside in which every aspect of our humanness becomes still in response to the stillness within the Divine.

Some focus on a particular form of prayer or meditation to support a contemplative way of living. **At Eremos we focus on creating space via silence, so you can connect with your heart to the heart of the Divine, God, or however you name the Source of all that is.**

As **our founder, Jean Springer**, always said:

Silence within a contemplative perspective is truly an invitation to be with the One who loves us into silence—an invitation to respond to the whisper of loving communion.

Come just as you are. Come and rest with and in the One who longs to rest with you.

Thank you for being part of this contemplative community without walls! ***We hope to see you at an Eremos event soon!***

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