



Lenten Practice #3: Meditation

By The Rev. Jarrett Kerbel (3/20/26)

Meditation is a form of prayer that is an incredible resource for developing inner-peace and communion with God. There are many different ways to meditate but, in general, the key to contemplation is quieting our minds so that we can receive the love, grace, and guidance God is always pouring out on us.

When I was in high school, I learned meditation as a remedy for panic attacks. A sudden promotion to the ‘advanced’ academic track caused me massive anxiety attacks and frequent meltdowns. Overwhelmed and dysregulated, unable to cope with the pressure, I sank into depression.

Blessedly, my parents took me to a therapist who taught me how to slow down my racing mind and calm my charging heart; he taught me to meditate. Since the early 80s, meditation has been a consistent spiritual practice in my life, even when I took a short vacation from church attendance during college.

If only my clergy at church had taught me meditation! I would have been spared a lot of wasted time seeking resources outside of our tradition. Thanks be to God that my university had an excellent Religion Department where the Professors taught me about the long and deep history of contemplation in the Christian Tradition, from the Desert Fathers and Mothers through Meister Eckhart to John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena, St. Ignatius of Loyola, Thomas Merton and Thomas Keating.

Christian Meditation or Contemplation may use similar methods to Buddhist or Vedic/Yogic traditions with a major key difference. Our contemplation seeks to calm our inner turmoil and agitation so that God’s presence will unfold before our inner eye in all of God’s plenitude and abundant love. Eastern systems perceive transience and emptiness at the heart of existence, and believe that an enlightened awareness of that reality brings freedom from suffering. Christians perceive the loving presence of God holding all things in light and goodness as the core of reality and believe that an

enlightened awareness of God through Jesus frees us to love and suffer for the sake of the good God's way, truth, and life.

During Lent, I recommend Centering Prayer and Breath Counting Meditation as ways to calm the waters of our inner life so we can see God's face reflected in our souls. I am always glad to recommend books on contemplation; my favorite is *Invitation to Love* by Thomas Keating.