

# SAFE FORMS OF MEDITATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS

## Introduction

“A thing of beauty is a joy forever”, said John Keats. There is a beauty of the body and a beauty of the soul. Both capture our attention and we must work to preserve them. Just as physical exercise promotes health of the body, meditation can nurture a soul. When we perceive our body “as the temple of the Holy Spirit” and seek to slake the thirsts of our soul with the “living waters” of God then we enter into a spiritual realm. It implies that we are surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ and He sustains our spirit, soul and body. Practicing meditation in such an eco-system of God is safe.

The stresses of digital-world living, small and big crises and the effects of a pandemic have forced us to relook at how we cope with them. Eating well, good exercise and positive thinking have been traditional suggestions. But in recent times, meditation has captured our imagination. Today, the market offers many forms of meditations. So many that people are confused, doubtful and even fearful whether any of them expose a practitioner to spiritual forces. This pamphlet does not deal with such forms of meditation but offers safe Christian forms of meditation.

All medieval forms of meditation have religious roots with a primary objective of drawing closer to God and realising more of Him in one’s life. Desert fathers and mothers during this period have dedicated their lives for practicing Christian meditation. Hesychasm and Jesus prayer are two such practices. They are expanded later in this pamphlet. But contemporary forms of meditations have sought to make them physical and psychological, and delinked them from religious roots.

## Popular meditation forms

Among the many forms of meditation, the popular ones are:

- **mindfulness meditation** – Origins in Buddhism, focus on thoughts, here and now,
- **spiritual meditation** – Religious origins, focus on scripture, object, God-connection
- **focused meditation** – Focus on breathing, prayer beads, listen to gongs, candle light
- **movement meditation** – yoga, walking, gardening, other gentle forms of motion

- **mantra meditation** – Repeating scripture, like Om, Kalma, Rosary, etc.
- **transcendental meditation** – use of mantras with magical and spiritual powers
- **progressive relaxation** – to reduce tension in the body by relaxing muscles
- **loving-kindness meditation** – receiving and giving love to all people and living beings
- **visualization meditation** – achieving calm by visualizing positive scenes and images

Meditation is a discipline. As a practice, “an individual uses a technique of focusing the mind on a particular object, thought, or activity – to train attention and awareness – and achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm and stable state.”

**Christian meditation** – In Latin, *meditari*

**Form of prayer:** Christian meditation is a form of prayer in which a structured attempt is made to become aware of and reflect upon the revelations of God. It focusses on specific thoughts (such as Bible passages), and reflecting on their meaning in the context of the love of God.

**Meditation is for obedience:** The Bible mentions the words meditate or meditation 23 times. 19 times in the Book of Psalms itself. Meditation is often found alongside obedience indicating the purpose of meditation to be obedience (Joshua 1:8).

**Meditate on the Life of Jesus:** Christian meditation is looking back on Jesus’ life and thanksgiving adoration of God for his action in sending Jesus for human salvation. Such a looking back is based on the word of God. It has three distinctive features:

1. Christian meditation is grounded in the Bible. God revealed himself personally in the scripture and our engagement with him is based on it
2. It responds to the love of God as in 1 John 4:19: “We love, for he first loved us.”
3. The above two lead to the worship of God: making Christian meditation an exercise in praise.

**Holy Spirit aids us:** The role of the Holy Spirit is to help the meditator to understand the deeper meanings of the Word of God. One 12<sup>th</sup> century monk believed that when earnest meditation begins, the Holy Spirit enters the soul of the mediator, “turns water into wine” and shows the way towards contemplation and better understanding of God. Charles Spurgeon affirmed it by saying that when we meditate on the word of God, the Holy Spirit will

help us to ponder his message rather prepare it. The Spirit searches all things, even the deeper things of God (1 Cor. 2:10).

**Three types of meditation: Vocal prayers** are basic forms of communication in a relationship with the Triune God. A deeper form of prayer is **meditation**. The third and even deeper characterization of prayer is **contemplation**. During the Middle Ages (5<sup>th</sup> to late 15<sup>th</sup> century), Christianity moved beyond vocal prayers to Christian meditation. Progressively they resulted in two distinct and different practices: *Lectio Divina* in the West and *hesychasm* in the East.

### Three Forms of Meditation

#### 1. Lecto Divina

*Lectio Divina* refers to the “divine reading” or “spiritual reading” of the scriptures. It is not like we read a newspaper – reading only headlines and the news of preference. Not like a novel jumping to the climax as and when you want. ““But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”” (Romans 10: 8-10). The recitation of the biblical text that provides the rationale for Lecto Divina. ‘Pray and work’ was the motto of Benedictine monastery. Their day consisted of liturgical (corporate) prayers, manual labour and Lecto Divina - a quiet prayerful reading of the Bible. While following these four steps Holy Spirit must be our guide. The one who inspired the Word must now guide our meditation.

Guigo’s book *The Ladder of the Monks* offers four stages of methodical prayer.

- a. *Lectio* – **read** the word of God
- b. *Meditatio* – **meditate** (think) on the significance of the text
- c. *Oratio* – then respond in **prayer** which leads to
- d. *Contemplatio* – to **contemplate** (the gift of quiet stillness in the presence of God)

Seek in *reading* and you will find in *meditation*; knock in *prayer* and it will be opened to you in *contemplation* — the four stages of *Lectio Divina* as taught by John of the Cross (16<sup>th</sup> Century).

*Lectio Divina* has been likened to “feasting on the Word”: first, the taking of a bite (*lectio*); then chewing on it (*meditatio*); savouring its essence (*oratio*) and, finally, “digesting” it and making it a part of the body (*contemplation*). In Christian teachings, this form of meditative prayer leads to an increased (experiential) knowledge of Christ. *Lectio Divina* uses different Scripture passages at different times. Scripture passages may be repeated a few times but it is not repetitive in nature.

### **Lectio (“reading”)**

“These are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:9-10).”

Prior to reading of the word of God. Practice quiet stillness. “Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10).” Sit quietly and in silence pray. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide the reading of the Scripture. Then as you read, open your mind to finding Christ in the passage being read. Read the chosen passage slowly and gradually, several times. Usually, a passage is read four times, each time with a different focus. If the passage is from gospels then Jesus could be primary focus. Then the disciples. Then the teaching. Then the place. Read by getting into the character of disciples of the person interacting with Jesus. Attentive reading can help achieve higher level of understanding.

### **Meditatio (“meditation”)**

Here we meditate or ponder upon the text. The text is not approached as something to be studied but reverentially as the Living Word. We don’t look so much for the meaning of the passage as we desire the Holy Spirit to illuminate the inner or underlying message of it.

An example passage may be the statement by Jesus during the Last Supper in John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you.” A ‘study’ approach would see the context of the last supper to interpret it. One may study to see at what price this peace was wrought. But while meditating such approaches are avoided but one seeks to “enter that peace” and shares the peace of Christ. So, peace is experienced not so much by the study and analysis of

it but closer communion with God. Similar other passages for meditation are: "Abide in my love." "I am the Good Shepherd."

### ***Oratio* ("prayer")**

Prayer is understood as dialogue with God, as a loving conversation with God who has invited us into an embrace. We speak to Him when we pray and we hear Him when we read the divine saying. Listening is as important as speaking to God. Listening to God prepares us better to utter the words to God. The more we listen to Him in reading of his word, the more we will encounter the Word, and our words to Him will be acceptable.

### ***Contemplatio* ("contemplation")**

Contemplation takes place in terms of silent prayer that expresses love for God. Contemplative prayer is silence. Words in this kind of prayer are not speeches; they are like kindling that feeds the fire of love. In this silence, unbearable to the "outer" man, the Father speaks to us in incarnate Word. In this silence, the Spirit of adoption enables us to share in the prayer of Jesus. "Holy Spirit is like a kiss of the Father to one who contemplates."

## **2. Clare of Assisi Four-step approach to meditation**

Saint Clare's method is more visual compared to Guigo II Lecto Divina which is more intellectual. Her approach has four steps:

### ***Intueri* ("Gaze on the cross")**

Words like 'behold', 'look upon' and 'focus' would give us more understanding as to what we could do as a step to draw ourselves from all that is around and start getting 'centered' or composed. Crucifix is a great focus. It must not be misunderstood as idol worship. It can be an aid to transport us to Calvary. Knowledge of related scripture can help us in finding ourselves at the foot of the cross and gaze upon Him along with John and Mary the mother of our Lord. Get into a receptive mode and 'hear' what Christ might say to you. Read Numbers 21:9; John 12:32; John 19:37

### ***Considerare* ("Consider")**

Jesus the Son of God come to the world as the Son of Man. How He emptied Himself. How He taught, healed and suffered for us. How He was rejected, mocked and crucified. He is interceding for us before the Father. He is preparing a place for us. He is soon coming to

receive us. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God! Read Philippians 2: 5-11; John 18, 19; 1 John 3:1(a).

### **Contemplari ("Contemplate")**

What does all that mean to me? What is expected of me? How do I receive His commission? How can I be His ambassador? How can I expend my life for Him? What change is God asking me to make? Read 2 Cor. 5:20

### **Imitare ("Imitate")**

Hear the words, "Go and do likewise." Be the salt and light He wants you to be. 'Wash the feet' of (serve) fellow believers. Preach, proclaim and promote the gospel. Carry the cross. Read Colossians 4:5; Ephesians 5:15-17; Luke 19:23; Matthew 16:24-26.

### **3. Hesychasm (practice of silence)**

*Hesychasm* is based on Jesus' saying (Matt. 6:6): "whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." It answers the question, "How do I pray unceasingly?" Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

*Hesychasm* in tradition has been the process of retiring inward by ceasing to register the senses, in order to achieve an experiential knowledge of God. (One who practices *hesychasm* is called as a *hesychastic*.) We are able to move from a prayer of and in the mind to prayer of and in the heart.

Hesychasm involves the repetition of Jesus Prayer also known as The Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." This prayer is believed to be a method of cleaning and opening up the mind (the *Noetic* Prayer) and after this the heart (the *kardia* Prayer). The prayer of the heart is considered to be the unceasing prayer that the Apostle Paul advocates in (1 Thess. 5:17). Also in Song of Solomon 5:2: "I sleep, but my heart is awake." It reflects consciousness of God presence at all times.

### **The Jesus Prayer combines three Bible verses:**

Christological hymn: Philippians 2:6-11 (verse 11: "Jesus Christ is Lord"),

Annunciation found in: Luke 1:31-35 (verse 35: "Son God"), and

Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican: Luke 18:9-14 (verse 13: "God be merciful to me a sinner").

Jesus Prayer is not only for attaining humility, love, or purification of sinful thoughts, but rather it is becoming holy and seeking communion with God. It demands setting the mind apart from rational activities and ignoring the physical senses for the experiential knowledge of God. It is not a substitute for prayer, charity (loving generosity), repentance and fasting. Therefore:

- The Jesus Prayer is, first of all, a prayer addressed to God. It's not a means of self-deifying or self-deliverance, but a counterexample to Adam's pride repairing the breach it produced between man and God.
- The aim is not to be dissolved or absorbed into nothingness or into God, or reach another state of mind, but to (re)unite with God (which by itself is a process) while remaining a distinct person.
- It is an invocation of Jesus' name, because Christian anthropology (study of human as it relates to God) and soteriology (study of religious doctrines of salvation) are strongly linked to Christology (the study of Christ) in Orthodox monasticism.
- In a modern context the continuing repetition is regarded by some as a form of meditation, the prayer functioning as a kind of mantra. However, Orthodox users of the Jesus Prayer emphasize the *invocation* of the name of Jesus Christ which would be contemplation on the Triune God rather than simply emptying the mind.
- Acknowledging "a sinner" is to lead firstly to a state of humbleness and repentance, recognizing one's own sinfulness.
- Practicing the Jesus Prayer is strongly linked to mastering passions of both soul and body, e.g., by fasting. For the Eastern Orthodox it is not the body that is wicked, but "the bodily way of thinking"; therefore salvation also regards the body.
- Unlike "seed syllables" in particular traditions of chanting mantras, the Jesus Prayer may be translated into whatever language the pray-er customarily uses. The emphasis is on the meaning, not on the mere utterance of certain sounds. For example: Pronouncing Jesus in English or *Yesu* in Telugu would be equally valid.
- There is no emphasis on the psychosomatic techniques, which are merely seen as helpers for uniting the mind with the heart, not as prerequisites.

## Practice

Anyone may practice Jesus Prayer. It is not limited to Priests and Clergy. Laypeople, men, women and children can practice it. It would help to have spiritual guide. He/she may be certified or a “*practical theologian*” (a person well versed in theology but without official credentials).

## Stages in Hesychasm

- *Katharsis* or purification – Pay attention and focus to the consciousness of the inner world and words of Jesus Prayer to reject tempting thoughts. The tempting thoughts are seen as thieves come to steal your cluster of grapes. Passionately pray unceasingly 24/7 to maintain sobriety (free of tempting thoughts) and overcome temptation of laziness. Particular attention may be paid to the eight passions: gluttony, fornication, avarice (love of money), anger, sadness, acedia (anxiety of the heart), vainglory and pride.
- *Theoria* or illumination – The goal at this stage is a practice of the Jesus Prayer with the mind in the heart. He prays with meaning, with intent, for real. It is not mouthing of the words with the associated syllables and sounds but an invocation and an introspection. This stage is called the guard of the mind. His mind has a certain stillness and emptiness that is punctuated only by the eternal repetition of the Jesus Prayer.
- *Theosis* or deification (union with God) – From the ‘guard of the mind’ one is raised to contemplation by the grace of God. Contemplation of God is experienced as light, the “uncreated light”. The “uncreated light” is identified with the Holy Spirit. Such a state is described as theosis or deification. It is not a state to be achieved or be in but an experience to be received whenever offered by God in His mercy and grace. One must return to catharsis and theoria.

## Conclusion

Our meditation must be a loving response to the knock of God on the door of heart for a time of abiding fellowship. When Jesus the Light comes in the darkness in our heart is dispelled. In meditation, He will come in and sup (feast) with us. He will slake our thirsts so that the world will lose its hold on us. Living waters will flow from our hearts and our cup would overflow into the lives of our community. A ‘Safe Meditation’ format is given below.



## APPENDIX - 1

### A SAFE MEDITATION FORMAT - 1

**Setting:** Your personal and private space

**Place:** Study room, bedroom, living room, terrace, etc. (wherever there is no external disturbance). If in a room, door may be closed to avoid any disturbance.

**Ambience:** Well-lit, ventilated and not cluttered. The room must not have any strong odors to distract your attention.

**Seating:** Ideally, seated cross-legged on the floor on a comfortable mat, durrie, carpet or mattress. Sofa is also good. Back in a comfortable position and hands rested on your legs.

Second option: Seated, legs stretched out on the floor on a comfortable mat/dhurie/carpet/mattress. You may like to lean your back against a wall, or any other supportive surface. Back in a comfortable position and hands rested on your legs.

Third option: Seated on a comfortable chair/sofa. Back in a comfortable position and hands rested on your legs.

**Time duration:** 60 minutes

**PREPARATION (3 minutes):** Bring yourself to stillness. The idea is to bring your mind, body and spirit into quiet calm. Importantly, know that you are retreating from a busy world into God's presence. You quieten yourself before you invoke the presence of God. The setting is not that God is waiting for you and you rush into his presence breathless and mind all cluttered. Helpful to recall: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). You may like to listen to a soft instrumental rendering of the song: "Be still and know" by Hillsong. Songs are advised only if necessary.

**INVOCATION (2 MINUTES):** When you are still, invite God, call upon Him to receive you into His presence. To grant the favour of His presence. To give you the gift of His fellowship and communion to you. Like, you have set the place to receive the most important guest and have a great conversation and 'meal' with Him. (Only that He is not a Guest but the Lord of your life who desires to have an intimate relationship with you.) Ask for Holy Spirit to guide you (Luke 11:33).

**MEDITATIVE PRAYER (15 minutes):** Pray the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:2-4) slowly deliberately and intentionally. At least two times. Four times is not uncommon. Normally, it takes 25-30 seconds to say the Lord's Prayer in English. The second time slow it down to say it in 60 seconds. You can do this by pausing after each phrase. Like, "Our Father in heaven . . . *pause* . . . hallowed be your name . . . *pause* . . . your kingdom come . . . *pause* . . ." The third time if you want to increase it to 90-120 seconds, pause between each word.

The purpose of slowing down is to reflect on the meaning of the words of the prayer. Once you have slowed down to saying it word by word, you are ready to 'meditate' on the meaning and significance of the word. For example:

"Our": Meaning: God is the Father of my spouse, my children and me. Significance: It is a corporate prayer, includes others, my relationships with Him is personal but not without others.

"Father": Meaning: God wants me to address Him as my Father. Significance: I am His child. I can be open and free with Him.

"in heaven": Meaning: Heavenly Father, not earthly. Significance: Heavenly Father is loving, holy and faithful (many times earthly fathers do not measure up and are stumbling blocks for prayer).

**Variations:** Other suggested passages for this slot are:

A Prayer of Repentance: Psalm 51

The Song of Mary: Luke 1:46-55; It may take more than 15 minutes

The Song of Moses: Exodus 15: 1-17; You may like to divide it into parts: Exodus 15:1-5; 15:6-13; 15:14-17 and do one part each day.

**MEDITATING ON BIBLE PASSAGE (20 minutes):** Listen to what God is saying, conveying, feeling . . .

Here you can read the passage slowly and absorb the love, goodness and greatness of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. It is not a cognitive study of the scripture but receiving the love, mercy and grace of God. It is more about knowing (experiencing) God than

knowing (knowledge) about God. Therefore, it is not a suspension of our mind but transformation of the same in the whole experience.

The passages are read slowly, reflectively and measuredly as illustrated with the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord the Shepherd of His People: Psalm 23

David's Praise to God: 1 Chronicles 29:10-15

Blessing and Suffering of the Godly: Psalm 41

Desiring God in the Midst of Trouble: Psalm 42

**PRAYER: Respond to God based on what you have 'heard', felt and 'received' in meditation (10 minutes):** You may like to kneel, stand or sit with your head bowed down.

Allow the Holy Spirit to prompt you to respond to what you have heard, felt and received from God. Utter – saying spontaneously, say it from the heart – your feelings and thoughts. Need not necessarily be a rush of words. They can be “groanings” (Romans 8:26). There could be just silences and pauses but they are **with** the Lord. The **withness** is important.

**HYSECHASTIC PRAYER OR JESUS PRAYER OR THE PRAYER (5 minutes):** “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy on me a sinner.”

Say this prayer repetitively, slowly, intentionally and meaningfully. As you say it mean every word of it and let the promptings of the Holy Spirit bring meaning and substance out of it. Slowly, let the prayer sink from the mind to the heart. Let it become your heart beat. Then it can become your “unceasing prayer” through the day and night and even sleep.

Say the hesychastic prayer sitting. A variation could be four postures:

When you say, “Lord Jesus Christ”: Look up, lift your hands to heaven in an adoration mode

When you say, “Son of God”: Bow your head, bring your hands down to shoulder level, with your palms facing ground in a worship mode or hands together in a ‘*namasthe*’ posture.

When you say, “Have mercy on me”: Bow from your waist with folded hands.

**CLOSING MOMENTS (5 minutes):** Make it a spontaneous prayer of thanksgiving, praise, petitions and intercession.

## A SAFE MEDITATION FORMAT - 2

**Setting:** Your personal and private space

**Place:** Study room, bedroom, living room, terrace, etc. (wherever there is no external disturbance). If in a room, door may be closed to avoid any disturbance.

**Ambience:** Well-lit, ventilated and not cluttered. The room must not have any strong odors to distract your attention.

**Seating:** Ideally, seated cross-legged on the floor on a comfortable mat, durrie, carpet or mattress. Sofa is also good. Back in a comfortable position and hands rested on your legs.

Second option: Seated, legs stretched out on the floor on a comfortable mat/dhurie/carpet/mattress. You may like to lean your back against a wall, or any other supportive surface. Back in a comfortable position and hands rested on your legs.

Third option: Seated on a comfortable chair/sofa. Back in a comfortable position and hands rested on your legs.

**Time duration:** 40 - 60 minutes

**PREPARATION (3 minutes):** Bring yourself to stillness. The idea is to bring your mind, body and spirit into quiet calm. Importantly, know that you are retreating from a busy world into God's presence. You quieten yourself before you invoke the presence of God. The setting is not that God is waiting for you and you rush into his presence breathless and mind all cluttered. Helpful to recall: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). You may like to listen to a soft instrumental rendering of the song: "Be still and know" by Hillsong. If you are able to bring yourself to stillness quickly, you may stop using music.

**INVOCATION (2 MINUTES):** When you are still, invite God, call upon Him to receive you into His presence. Seek the favour of His presence and the gift of His fellowship and communion to you. Your setting of the place and your attitude is to receive the most important guest and have a great conversation and 'meal' with Him. (Only that He is not a guest but the Lord of your life who desires to have an intimate relationship with you.) Ask for Holy Spirit to guide you (Luke 11:33).

## MEDITATIVE/CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER USING ANGLICAN PRAYER BEADS:



Anglican Prayer Beads are a relatively new form of prayer, blending the Orthodox Jesus Prayer Rope and the Roman Catholic Rosary. The thirty-three-bead design was created by the Rev. Lynn Bauman in the mid-1980s, through the prayerful exploration and discovery of a contemplative prayer group.

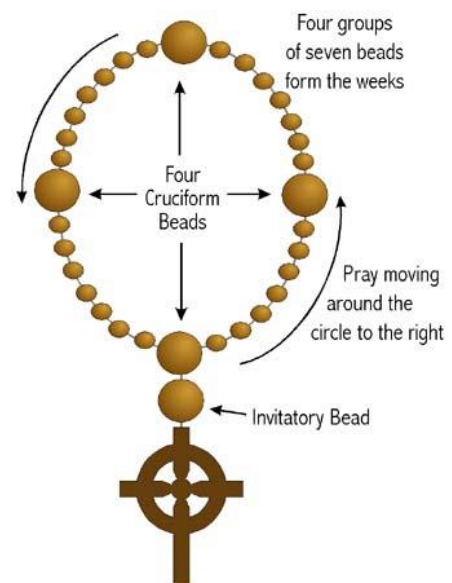
The use of the rosary or prayer beads helps to bring us into contemplative of meditative prayer—really thinking about and being mindful of praying, of being in the presence of God—by use of mind, body, and spirit. The touching of the fingers on each successive bead is an aid in keeping our mind from wandering, and the rhythm of the prayers leads us more readily into stillness.

The prayer beads are made up of twenty-eight beads divided into four groups of seven called weeks. In the Judeo-Christian tradition the number seven represents spiritual perfection and completion. Between each week is a single bead, called a cruciform bead as the four beads form a cross. The invitatory bead between the cross and the wheel of beads brings the total to thirty-three, the number of years in Jesus' earthly life.

### Praying with the beads

To begin, hold the Cross and say the prayer you have assigned to it, then move to the Invitatory Bead. Then enter the circle of the prayer with the first Cruciform Bead, moving to the right, go through the first set of seven beads to the next Cruciform bead, continuing around the circle, saying the prayers for each bead.

It is suggested that you pray around the circle of the beads three times (which signifies the Trinity) in an unhurried pace, allowing the repetition to become a sort of lullaby of love and praise that enables your mind to rest and your heart to become quiet and still.



Praying through the beads three times and adding the crucifix at the beginning or the end, brings the total to one hundred, which is the total of the Orthodox Rosary. A period of silence should follow the prayer, for a time of reflection and listening. Listening is an important part of all prayer.

Begin praying the Anglican Prayer Beads by selecting the prayers you wish to use for the cross and each bead. Practice them until it is clear which prayer goes with which bead, and as far as possible commit the prayers to memory.

Find a quiet spot and allow your body and mind to become restful and still. After a time of silence, begin praying the prayer beads at an unhurried, intentional pace. Complete the circle of the beads three times.

When you have completed the round of the prayer beads, you should end with a period of silence. This silence allows you to centre your being in an extended period of silence. It also invites reflection and listening after you have invoked the Name and Presence of God.

### **Closing your Prayers**

The following ending can be used with any of the prayers in this booklet. After three circuits around the prayer beads, you may finish as follows:

*Last time through:*

#### **Invitatory Bead**

The Lord's Prayer

#### **The Cross**

I bless the Lord.

(For step-by-step instructions please visit:

<http://www.kingofpeace.org/prayerbeads/trisagion.htm>

## APPENDIX - 2

### CONTRAST BETWEEN EASTERN AND CHRISTIAN FORMS OF MEDITATION

S. No.	EASTERN FORMS OF MEDITATION	CHRISTIAN FORMS OF MEDITATION
1.	Repeated use of mantras	No use of mantras, only scripture as prayers
2.	Impersonal consummation with the Brahman	Heightens the personal relationship based on the love of God that marks Christian communion
3.	Focus on self and lead by technique or spirit	Focus on Christ guided by the Holy Spirit
4.	Concentration on the physical aspects "can degenerate into cult of the body" and equating bodily states with mysticism "could lead to psychic disturbance and at times, to moral deviations."	Fasting at times is recommended but not mandatory. Spiritual in emphasis that has positive effect on thoughts and emotions.
5.	Self-consciousness, stillness and self-emptying or emptying of the mind	Dialogue of love, a process in which movement is from 'self' to the 'you' of God
6.	Achieve thoughtlessness, trance, higher consciousness, bliss, etc.	Achieve communion with Christ; listen to the voice of God; realize the love of Christ. Ecstasy is incidental.
7.	Blurs the distinction between good and evil and creates the mindset that "we cannot condemn anyone and nobody needs forgiveness"	Reaches for clearer revelations of Christ the Way the Truth and the Life.
8.	People are encouraged to follow enlightened masters.	Only be led by the Spirit of Christ.
9.	Characterized by achievement	Characterized by receptivity
10.	Can lead to practices of the occult	Within safe boundaries of the scripture

Sources:

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<https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/types-of-meditation#visualization-meditation>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian\\_meditation#:~:text=Christian%20meditation%20is%20a%20form,upon%20the%20revelations%20of%20God.&text=Christian%20meditation%20is%20the%20process,of%20the%20love%20of%20God.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_meditation#:~:text=Christian%20meditation%20is%20a%20form,upon%20the%20revelations%20of%20God.&text=Christian%20meditation%20is%20the%20process,of%20the%20love%20of%20God.)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus\\_Prayer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_Prayer)

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<http://www.kingofpeace.org/prayerbeads.htm>

<http://www.kingofpeace.org/prayerbeads/trisagion.htm>

James Finley: *Christian Meditation: Experiencing the presence of God, a guide in contemplation.*

[https://www.google.com/search?q=christian+meditation+james+finley+pdf&rlz=1C1CHZNenIN943IN943&sxsrf=ALeKk02pCMG2OkPeiKuK2COKsUGvHJpu1w%3A1616050567758&ei=h\\_ISYlvwLfyprtoPy9S-QA&oq=christian+meditation+by+James&gs\\_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAEYATIFCC4QkwlyBggAEBYQHjoECAAQRzoECAAQZoCCABQoQdYiSjg9DRoAHADeACAAXyIAb4HkgEDOC4ymAEAoAEBggEHZ3dzLXdpsgBCMABAQ&sclient=gws-wiz](https://www.google.com/search?q=christian+meditation+james+finley+pdf&rlz=1C1CHZNenIN943IN943&sxsrf=ALeKk02pCMG2OkPeiKuK2COKsUGvHJpu1w%3A1616050567758&ei=h_ISYlvwLfyprtoPy9S-QA&oq=christian+meditation+by+James&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAEYATIFCC4QkwlyBggAEBYQHjoECAAQRzoECAAQZoCCABQoQdYiSjg9DRoAHADeACAAXyIAb4HkgEDOC4ymAEAoAEBggEHZ3dzLXdpsgBCMABAQ&sclient=gws-wiz)