



## 2021 SSSIO Regions 1 and 2 Online Silent Retreat *Information for activities to be performed on your own*

### 1. Activity: Commune with Nature / Mindful Nature Walk

- a. **Quote:** “Nature is a great gift of God to humanity, but even more important, it is the vesture of God. The ultimate truth is that Nature is the manifestation of God. Every cell, every atom, every moment in the universe is permeated by divinity, which is love itself. We owe our very existence to Nature. Like a compassionate mother, Nature nurtures us, sustains us, and protects us by giving us food, water, air, land and natural resources that often are taken for granted. Nature is also a supreme teacher, for she teaches us love, patience, forbearance and sacrifice, which can be experienced by observing the interactions of trees, plants, animals, rivers, lakes and other natural phenomena. Our attitude to such a compassionate Mother Nature should be one of awe, reverence and gratitude” – Divine Discourse, 4 Oct 1970
- b. **Time:** Saturday, October 9, 10:45 am – 12:00 pm EDT
- c. **Instructions:** For this activity, we suggest you consider going to a park or a scenic place near where you live.
  - i. Please reflect on Swami’s Divine words on Nature
  - ii. Please spend this time in relaxing and reenergizing yourself by communing with nature
  - iii. Do not forget to wear a mask and maintain social distance



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### 2. Activity: Service Activity

- a. **Quote 1:** “On the spiritual path, the first step is selfless service. Through selfless service, one can realise the Divinity that is all this creation” – Divine Discourse, November 20, 1970
- b. **Quote 2:** “The wise ones use money, strength, intelligence, skills, aptitudes and opportunities for helping others and making their lives happier. Thus, they win divine grace. For sevā (selfless service) is the highest form of worship” – Divine Discourse, November 21, 1985
- c. **Time:** Saturday, October 9, 1:35 – 2:30 pm EDT
- d. **Instructions:** We recommend you consider performing one of the following service activities on your own during this timeslot
  - i. **Second Chance/Go-Green Initiative:** We suggest that attendees go through their homes to find unused items to donate. Collect items such as clothes, shoes, food for pantries and take them to the usual places you donate to. Or reach out to your service coordinator who will help with putting the items to use. As well as find items that can be recycled (find items that shouldn't go to landfill, e.g., electronics, plastics, batteries etc.,)
    1. **Additional information:** An article by fellow YA Service initiative: <https://sathyasai.us/media/aug-2021/second-chance-initiative>
  - ii. **Share the Love:** Christmas is around the corner. Fill your hearts with love and share it by
    1. Helping make cards with Swami's messages and giving them to your center's usual service activity locations (e.g., soup kitchens)
    2. Sending letters to the below place
      - a. [https://www.stjude.org/get-involved/other-ways/online-card-message-patients.html?sc\\_icid=get-involved-lz-card](https://www.stjude.org/get-involved/other-ways/online-card-message-patients.html?sc_icid=get-involved-lz-card)
      - b. <https://www.children.org/make-a-difference/other-ways-to-help/volunteer-letter-writing>
  - iii. **Letters of Love:** A letter of love is a humble attempt at spreading smiles to refugee children, every New Year and on other special occasions. It is a token of hope, personalized with your happy photograph and a warm message, written by hand by our team of volunteers in their respective language and doodled with colors. Please check the link below for details.
    1. <https://letters-of-love.org/letters.html>
  - iv. **Making a loom knit baby hat:**
    1. **Supplies needed:** You could purchase these supplies at <https://www.michaels.com/>
      - a. Scissors



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- b. Knitting hook
  - c. Knitting needle
  - d. Yarn
  - e. 24 peg loom
- 2. Video link with instructions:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBhcW6n9Akw&feature=youtu.be>
- v. **Making a “No Sew” pet blanket:**
- 1. Supplies needed:**
    - a. 2 yards of fleece for the top
    - b. 2 yards of fleece for the bottom
    - c. Stuffing (at least 2 pounds)
    - d. Scissors
    - e. Fabric marker
    - f. Ruler
  - 2. Video link with instructions:**  
<https://www.onlinefabricstore.net/makersmill/how-to-make-a-no-sew-fleece-dog-bed/>
- vi. **Tree Planting:** Please visit <https://sathyasai.us/tree-planting> for more information on this seva
- vii. **Picking up trash in your neighborhood:**
- 1. Supplies:**
    - a. Plastic bag to collect trash
    - b. Separate bag for recyclables
    - c. Gloves
  - 2. Instructions:**
    - a. Do not forget to wear a mask and maintain social distance
    - b. Wear sturdy gloves and carry a trash bag with you
    - c. Clear out litter from a section of park, beach, vacant lot or your own neighborhood. Take all necessary precautions, including wearing sturdy gloves, being careful on riverbanks or near roads. You can pick your favorite walk and do a one-time sweep or make clean-up a regular family event.
    - d. Properly dispose of all litter.



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### 3. Activity: Contemplative Personal Time

- a. **Quote 1:** “Whatever you do, whatever you see, whatever you speak, saturate it with Divinity” – Divine Discourse, Feb 23, 2009
- b. **Quote 2:** “There are three stages of sadhana (spiritual practice). They are concentration, contemplation and meditation. Concentration entails fixing your gaze on one form. Contemplation occurs when you are able to perceive the form within you, even in its absence. Meditation means when, as a result of this exercise, this form is permanently imprinted in your heart. If you continue to meditate in this manner, the form will constantly be fixed in your heart. You should not confine your spiritual practices only to concentration and contemplation. While it is true that these are the first steps in your spiritual practices, you must progress further; you must transform concentration to contemplation, and then contemplation into meditation. When you carry this out, you will continue to visualize the form of God at all times. The ancient rishis (seers) adopted this form of meditation. That is why God manifested before them whenever they wished, talked to them and fulfilled their desires” – Divine Discourse, Feb 23, 2009
- c. **Time:** Saturday, October 9, 2:45 – 3:45 pm EDT
- d. **Instructions:** We recommend you consider doing one of the following activities on your own during this timeslot
  - i. **Likhita Japam (writing the Lord’s name):** Likhita Japam sheets are available on the retreat website. You could download and print them if needed.
  - ii. **Reading Spiritual Literature:** Please select any spiritual book of your choice to read.
  - iii. **Chanting (Namasmaraṇa):** You could either listen to or chant any name of your choice.
  - iv. **Silent Sitting:** Please refer to [http://www.isseducare.org/en/news/educational-experiences/137-ch-0?&l\\_over=1](http://www.isseducare.org/en/news/educational-experiences/137-ch-0?&l_over=1) for information on this topic.
  - v. **Gratitude Journaling:** Refer to [https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gratitude\\_journal](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gratitude_journal) for information.
  - vi. **Mandala coloring:** Mandala coloring sheets are available on the retreat website. You could download and print them if needed for this activity. You could also print them from this website. <https://mondaymandala.com/m>



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### 4. Optional Activity: Suggested Reading Links and Video Talks to consider after the main program

- a. **Quote 1:** “Of all the gifts of God, Time and Love are the most precious. Man has to make proper use of time in order to experience Divine love. But today everyone, be it a student or a householder or an ascetic, is wasting three-fourths of his time in worldly pursuits. Then how can he expect to have noble thoughts!” - Divine Discourse, 25 December 1999
- b. **Quote 2:** “Time is the very form of God. Birth and Death are encompassed by Time. Everyone, therefore, should regard Time as Divine and utilize it for performing sacred actions. You should not waste a single moment. Time wasted is life wasted. The fruits of your actions are determined by Time. All your experiences are the results of your action, whether it is happiness or sorrow, affluence or poverty. Hence, good and bad depend on what you do. As are your actions, so are the fruits thereof. The way you utilize your time determines the outcome.” – Divine Discourse, Jan 1, 1991
- c. **Time:** Saturday, October 9, 5:15 – 9:15 pm EDT
- d. **Suggested Reading:**
  - i. **Vahinis (Written by Sathya Sai Baba):** <http://www.sathyasai.org/vahinis>
  - ii. **Sathya Sai Speaks (Divine Discourses):**  
<http://www.sathyasai.org/discour/sathyasaispeaks/sathyasaispeaks.html>
  - iii. **Sathyam Shivam Sundaram (The Life of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba**
  - iv. **Written by N. Kasturi):** <http://saibaba.ws/avatar/sss/index.htm>
  - v. **Thapovanam:** <http://region7saicenters.org/csj/signups/sai-tapovanam-with-page-numbers.pdf>
- e. **Suggested Video Talks from previous Silent Retreats:**
  - i. **Dr. Srikanth Sola – Silent Retreat 2012**
    1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeUgaMuy7PU>
    2. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqPnSl\\_Ewfk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqPnSl_Ewfk)
    3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1TQYliDjkg>
    4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhhUA--6cAs>
    5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4qADfZWY00>
  - ii. **Dr. Sunder Iyer – Silent Retreat 2017**
    1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EiBlgJ39WqI>
    2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AssUZgvLagU>
    3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSDx8c02i3o>