

How to Deal with Distracting Thoughts

Consider which metaphor below you are drawn to. Imagine, for example, that as you are trying to pray, your grocery list comes to mind. Simply place that thought on the cloud, wave, train, leaf passing by and bring your attention back to God. This is where resolutely rely on the wisdom of St. Benedict's encouragement: "Begin again."

- Clouds floating, or birds flying, across the sky.
- Waves arising from the sea, then falling back in. You can watch the waves from the shore, without being swept away.
- Leaves and sticks floating down a stream. You don't have to dive in. You can watch from a bridge.
- ***A passing parade. You can watch the floats pass by. You don't have to climb on board.***
- Trains coming and going while you stand watching from the platform.
- A waterfall. You're standing behind it, not under it.
- ***Guests entering a hotel. You can be like the doorman: you greet the guests but you don't follow them to their rooms.***
- Cars passing by while you wait at an intersection.
- Suitcases dropping onto a conveyor belt at the airport. You can watch them pass by, without having to pick them up.
- People passing by you in the street. You can nod your head at them, but you don't have to stop and have a conversation.
- Wild horses running across the plains. You can admire them but no need to chase them.
- Bubbles rising in a champagne bottle. They rise to the surface and then disappear.
- Fish swimming in a tank. Watch them come and go.
- Children running across a playground. You can stay still and watch, while they run wherever they want to.
- Actors on a stage. You can watch the play; you don't need to get on stage and perform.
- 'Pop-ups' on the internet.
- Junk e-mail. You can't stop it from coming in – but you don't have to read it!
- Text messages on your mobile phone.
- Luggage passing by on a conveyor belt.