

## Mindfulness & Spirituality

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- What is mindfulness? New age religion? Does it introduce something foreign to the true faith? Good questions.
- Mindfulness takes advantage of something that is part of our nature. It is an exercise of the mind that is analogous to exercising the body.
- Origins: treatment protocol as a treatment for chronic pain sufferers. Pain killing medicine was not sufficient to alleviate suffering, It is an exercise, a tool to control the thoughts in one's mind.
- Mindfulness is not about emptying the mind. Eastern religions, especially Buddhism teach about emptying the mind of thoughts. Catholic mindfulness is the opposite. It is the effort to fill the mind with all that is around it. It is waking up to reality around you. It is taking in the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, feelings and thoughts that are happening each moment.
- Sixth sense. We have our five physical sense but there is another sense we have as well: imagination. Each organ has a function(s) it performs for the good of the body. The brain, besides being the control board for the nervous system also is a thought generator. Consider your thoughts. They simply come into your mind and we "watch" them as we would a movie. Thoughts are generated then pass. They are different from the fundamental sense of awareness we have or our reasoning process. Like input from the other five senses, they are reflected upon by the mind.
- Mindfulness: Toward a definition. It is "paying attention to the present moment without judgment or criticism" or an "awareness with acceptance", a "coming to our senses" or simply "waking up"
- Mindfulness is a tool we will use to help us be in the present moment to calm thoughts and ultimately, referencing Br. Lawrence, be present now to God who is always present to us.