

## DTO National Retreat 2024

(As of 4/10/2024)

**“The monastery far above the ocean had given me a rich sense of community because everyone I met there had come in search of the same silence and clarity; we were bound together by what was deepest in us.” - excerpt from Pico Iyer’s “ The Half Known Life”, pg.113**

### Business items:

The cost of the retreat is \$375.00 from Thursday to Sunday and \$100.00 for individual days. Payment can be given in cash or check to Ellyn Varela-Burstein. Please make the checks payable to Dharma Teacher Order, Inc.. There is a list of room assignments located in the elevators. The rooms are all single occupancy. In your room there will be: sheets, a blanket, a pillow, and a towel/facecloth. Please bring what you need to make yourself feel comfortable. There will be a sink in your room and bathrooms with showers on each floor. Men and women will be on separate floors. If there is another retreat happening at Mariandale, we ask that you be respectful of their space and practice. When leaving, place your bedding and towels in the pillowcase and leave it outside the door. Consider leaving a tip for the cleaning people if you are able.

Meals are vegetarian and will be served buffet style. Coffee and tea are always available in the cafeteria. We will sit together as a group while eating and wait for everyone to be seated before we start.. All meals will begin by the recitation of *The Five Contemplations* and will be silent. There will be gluten free options. Let us know if that is a preference in advance. The choices are often limited for gluten free diets. If there are food items that make you feel comfortable, please bring them. There is a refrigerator in which you can store the items. Remember to bring appropriate clothing for time spent outdoors.

\*There is a dana jar by the coffee machine, please consider making an offering if you are able.

\*We will collect dana for the three monastics in attendance. We also offer dana to the cook, Anthony. Consider offering donations if that feels right for you.

We ask that you consider silence after 10:00 p.m. in the evening and through the morning into after lunch until the second bell is rung at lunch on Friday and Saturday. On Sunday, there will be silence until 7:00 a.m. Most of our time together will take place in the Evergreen Room, which is the large room at the lowest floor.. We will orient you to the room and to the layout of the building if you are unfamiliar with Mariandale. Please bring your favorite cushions/benches. Chairs are provided, and a few cushions will be available if you need one. If you are struggling in any way during the retreat, please don't hesitate to tap Fernando. All conversations will be confidential.

There will be one lay priest ordination and three full lay priest ordinations on Sunday. If you are involved in the ceremony, please bring: bowl, candle, robe, and sanghati. Several people will be receiving certificates for completing the class and for that, only your presence is needed.

We plan to offer Zoom access to the Friday and Saturday night sessions as well as to the Sunday morning ceremonies so that those who could not attend the retreat can also participate with us.

**Schedule:****Thursday, April 25, 2024:**

We ask that you arrive at approximately 4:00 p.m.

From 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.: Take time to acclimate yourself to the retreat center, finding your room, settling in.

6:00- 7:00 pm - Dinner

7:00 p.m. -7:30 p.m.: Dinner (You can stay at dinner the whole time or take personal time elsewhere. That applies to all meals. Do your best to be on time for meals as eating will not begin until everyone is seated. Dinner is silent until the second bell is rung.

7:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m.: Practice in the main meditation room

Incense Ceremony

Chanting the Heart Sutra

Reciting the 5 precepts

20 minutes of sitting

10 minutes of walking (instructions will be given)

20 Prostrations (instructions will be given)

Beginning Anew Ceremony

Introductory Remarks

9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.: Free time: Good time to meet in the cafeteria to chat, have a hot beverage before bed, or relax into bed.

10:00 pm - Begin Noble Silence

**Friday, April 26, 2024 (Silence until second bell at lunch)**

6:30 a.m. to 7:30 am: Practice in the main mediation room

Sitting for 20 minutes

Walking for 10 minutes

20 Prostrations

Sitting until 7:30

You are always invited to sit longer if you feel moved to do so.

7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.: Personal time in silence.

Personal time is peppered throughout the day and may be a good time to take a shower or tour the grounds. There is a beautiful labyrinth and a natural circular walking route by the river. Consider journaling, reading contemplative/spiritual literature, or just spending time without watching the news, television, or being on the phone. Often you will find one of us sitting on the benches by the river, enjoying nature. There are opportunities to hold meetings during these times as well.

8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.: Breakfast/Personal time

9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.: Practice in the main meditation room.

**Meetings with Thay and Phap Lan 9:30 to 11:00. (sign-up)**

Incense ceremony

Chanting the Heart Sutra

Reciting the 5 Precepts

Sitting 20 minutes

Walking 10 minutes

20 Prostrations

*Sitting until 11:00*

11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.: Personal time

12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.: Lunch

1:00 p.m. to 2:00p.m.: Personal time

2:00 - 2:30 pm - Outside walking meditation

Gather at the side door for group walking meditation.

2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.: Afternoon practice in Evergreen Room (volunteers to prepare tea ceremony)

Sitting 20 minutes

Walking 10 minutes

Touching the Earth

Tea Ceremony

Sitting until 4:00

4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.: Sharing experiences of becoming a teacher or a priest.

Why become a teacher or a priest?

5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.: Personal time

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.: Dinner

7:00 - 7:30 pm - Personal time

7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.: Practice in the main meditation room

Sitting 10 minutes

DTO membership meeting - reports on nominations for the Board of Directors

Updates from all Sanghas present

Updates on all DTO programs

Sit for 10 minutes

9:00 p.m.: Personal time

10:00 pm- Begin Noble Silence

**Saturday, April 27, 2024**

6:30 a.m. to 7:30 am: Practice in the main mediation room

Sitting for 20 minutes

Walking for 10 minutes  
20 Prostrations  
Sitting until 7:00 a.m.

7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.: Personal time

8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.: Breakfast

9:00 - 9:30 am - Personal time

9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.: Practice in the main meditation room

**Meetings with Thay and Phap Lan 9:30 to 12:00 (sign up)**

Incense ceremony  
Chanting the Heart Sutra  
Reciting the 5 Precepts  
Sitting 20 minutes  
Walking 10 minutes  
20 Prostrations  
Chanting Om Mani Padme Hum X3  
Sitting until 11:00 a.m.

11:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m.: Personal time (silent)

12:00 p.m. to 1:00: Lunch

1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.: Walking meditation  
Meet at the side door.

2:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.: Personal break

2:15 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.: Dharma Festival  
Sitting 10 minutes

Teaching on how Dharma Festival works (Fernando)  
Festival offerings from students/Comments or questions from Sangha  
Sit for a few moments together before breaking

4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.: Free time (good time for resting, gathering, personal interests, "business" meetings)

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.: Dinne

7:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.: Practice in the main meditation room  
Sitting 10 minutes

Q and A with Thay  
Dharma Festival for those who want to share and didn't have a chance  
Sitting for a few moments before breaking for the evening

9:00 p.m.- 10 pm - Personal time

10:00 pm - Noble Silence begins

**Sunday, April 28, 2024**

6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.: Practice in the main meditation room

Sitting 20 minutes

Walking meditation

Sitting until 7:00

Silence ends

7:00 to 8:00: Pack rooms/cars, volunteers needed to prepare Evergreen Room for ceremony. Might want to consider a shower as there will be no time later.

8:00 to 8:30: Breakfast

8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.: Assemble for the ceremony in Evergreen Room (Fernando and Jon will be in the kitchen area by the ceremony room to help with robes if needed.)

9:00 a.m. to 11:00: Ceremony in the Evergreen Room

11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.: Good time for pictures.

Discussion on how the retreat went.

Break down the Wellspring Room (Those with family and friends present are excused... weather permitting, time on the grounds before lunch might be well received.). Good time to bring bags to the car.

12:00 to 1:00: Lunch and farewells. (Everyone is welcome.)