

## **'Embracing Silence'**

*a day with Revd Christopher Ryushin Collingwood Roshi*

at Holy Rood House

Thirsk YO7 1HX

9.45 for 10am – 4pm

18<sup>th</sup> June 2026

*An introduction to the day by Revd Christopher Collingwood:*

If it's not too painful or upsetting to do so, cast your mind back to the experience of lockdown during Covid. As life as we knew it came to a halt, one of the things that struck many was the presence of silence, experienced initially simply as the absence of noise: the sounds of traffic, aeroplanes, drills machines and so on. A very common observation was how birdsong suddenly became audible, as if the absence of humanly manufactured noise almost invited and encouraged the birds to sing. For many this silence was a blessed relief; for others it signified loneliness and the loss of human contact and communication.

In most spiritual traditions, silence is integral. Silence has a knack of unmasking us, bringing us face to face with who we really are and with the reality we call God. Silence allows us to discover first of all how much internal noise there is in our hearts and minds. While this can be disconcerting to start with, if we stay with it silence reveals itself to be all-enveloping and embracing. Rather than experiencing silence simply as the absence of noise, we come to experience silence as presence, not so much something we enter into but who and what we truly are. This presence is the source of love and acceptance, compassion and peace.

In Psalm 46 we read, 'Be still and know that I am God.' This is not an invitation to have thoughts about God but to 'taste' God in the silence and stillness beyond words, concepts and ideas. This quiet day will provide opportunities to embrace silence experientially, through a series of guided meditations, as well as through talks and discussions, drawing on the wisdom - in particular - of Christian and Zen contemplative practices.