Guidelines for Creating a Sanctuary and Preparing for the Virtual Retreat
We offer some guidelines here about how to successfully create a sanctuary in your home—here are some do’s and don’ts which we hope will help you prepare effectively:

• Ideally you should be alone in your home. If you have a spouse or family who are not attending the retreat, look into whether it is possible for them to take a vacation during this time? If that’s not possible, can you create a space where you are not in contact with others or where interaction is minimized? Is there a spare bedroom where you can sleep alone?

• Please don’t plan to multi-task while attending the virtual retreat: Don’t plan to do emails, make phone calls, do more than minimal housework, etc.

• Please don’t socialize. Ghandi observed what he called “silent Mondays”. He didn’t speak on Mondays, and he would write notes if it was necessary to communicate. You could have a sign that you hold up for any unexpected visitors: “In silence and meditation until September 24.” Or something similar to that.

• Unplug or turn off your phones when you are not on the phone bridge calls.

• Unplug the television (except to watch movies that are part of the program) and don’t read the news.

• Please don’t do any unnecessary errands or driving around.

• Obviously if you need to quickly pick up something from the grocery store or pharmacy, etc. you can do that—but keep it to a minimum—the point of the retreat is that we are not participating in our secular lives during this retreat at all. We are giving our lives to Spirit during this time.

• Plan your food in advance. Perhaps you can cook in advance and freeze some meals that you can easily reheat. Perhaps a friend would be willing to drop off a bag of groceries at your door once or twice during the retreat. If you can manage it, you will benefit from eating vegan or vegetarian food for awhile before or during the retreat time. Perhaps you may choose to reap the benefits of doing a limited fast before the retreat or for part of the time of the retreat. A liquid fast (veggie juice, veggie broth, etc.) for a day or so would be helpful towards opening up your awareness. It does not need to be extreme. Please keep it all simple, doable and wholesome. With some advance planning, food does not have to be a big distraction during the retreat.

• Physically and energetically clean your space impeccably just prior to the beginning of the retreat. If you don’t know how to clean your space energetically, we can send you some directions. For example: vacuuming/sweeping the floors, dusting, spraying the room with a mixture of water and essential oils, ringing bells, chanting (like Lakshmi’s mantra “shring”), playing sacred music, burning incense, etc. can change the energy if you are going through a difficult piece, or just to keep your spirit uplifted. It’s important to keep the energy and space clear and clean for the duration of the seminar.

• If you don’t already have one, prepare a sacred meditation space as well as an altar for the retreat. Keep fresh flowers in the house for a very sacred feel.

We hope this helps you with some ideas and guidelines for ways of creating a sanctuary in your home and preparing for the virtual retreat. There is no reason your home can’t be a beautiful, impeccable spiritual refuge for you. We see this format has enormous sacred potential that will support everyone deeply and peacefully as we meet the challenges and opportunities of this time in human history.