

Christian Meditation in Canada

NEWS NOTES SUMMER 2004 VOL. 13 NO. 2 THE WORLD COMMUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

Canada's Christian Meditation Schools Score High

This past February and May, the members of the Resource Team of the Canadian Christian Meditation School (CCMS) were quite busy sharing their particular gifts with their attending meditators. Much appreciation is extended to The Rev. Glenda Meakin, Michel Legault, Millie McDougall Allen, Sr. Kathleen Bolger, Norma Hannouch, Joyce Rogers and Louise Menard for continuing the mission of the World Community of Christian Meditation (WCCM) Schools, which communicates and nurtures meditation as taught by John Main in the spirit of serving the unity of all. The following accounts were submitted by some of the participants who were excited to share their stories with the readers of *News Notes*. You will find them interesting and engaging.



Affirming the Gift in Ontario

"Inspirational, thoughtful, challenging, helpful, and wonderfully energizing" were some of the words I heard on St. Valentine's weekend as I was leaving the fourth Canadian School for Sharing the Gift at Mount Mary Retreat Centre in Ancaster, Ontario. Upon reflection, my own word to describe the weekend experience was "affirmation." The following is my reaction to this faith journey of learning.

Throughout the weekend, the commitment to and the practice of meditation as taught by Dom John Main was personally affirmed during the group meditations, talks, instructions, and interactions in faith. Our leaders continually confirmed for me that each one of us is able to share with others this great gift of meditation simply by sharing our own faith experience in the practice.

The Reverend Glenda Meakin skillfully engaged us in the re-telling of the biblical story of the Samaritan woman talking with Jesus at Jacob's well. Her gentle insistence on the details brought home the realization of our longing to be with the Divine and how the essential teaching of John Main leads us towards this longing.

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Glowing Marks for the Prince Edward Island School

Listen to their voices!

The School held on 7-9 May in Rustico, PEI, was a wonderful experience for me, especially the peacefulness I felt in and from our time of meditation together. I have learned so much about the meaning and the history of Christian Meditation. I also derived much joy from strolling and drinking-in the beautiful scenery – the deep blue water, the greening fields and the sparkling, clean, crisp air. This beautiful weekend will remain a cherished memory of God's love expressed through the loving care and kindness of my hosts.

Janet Hartford, Truro, NS

Participating in the School for Christian Meditation was an enlightening and challenging experience. Each of the sessions provided during the weekend broadened and deepened my

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Affirming the Gift in Ontario *continued from front page*

Using as our guide the story of the Hebrew people's Exodus from Egypt toward the Promised Land, Glenda's talk on the psychological stages of the journey of meditation helped make our own journeys relevant. With her promptings, we were encouraged to recognize that the diverse emotions experienced by the Hebrew people on that journey are the universal emotions experienced in our own meditation journey. As she guided us through the people's reactions to the events of the 40-year journey, I became aware that I have had those same reactive emotions since I began the discipline of the prayer of the heart. I know that this restored spark of identity will not only help me to be "present" to the practice of silent meditation but also to my companion meditators who are struggling with these universal emotions as they commit to the twice-daily practice.

Through careful selections of readings and music, Millie McDougall Allen provided a calm environment for us to listen and learn as well as an ideal silent space for our five meditations. Her attentiveness to the weekend resulted in a seamless progression from one session to another. Millie's bubbly personality shone through her talks and definitely convinced me that "sharing" the gift is the gift we receive as we share meditation with others.

Michel Legault embraces and lives the gifts of the Spirit – big time! He showed his love for us, his love for the Creator and his confidence in our ability to share the gift of meditation with others. His lively talks and fun quiz contained concise, pertinent information on the Christian tradition of prayer that uses a sacred word, the mantra. The increased background information confirms for me how necessary this form of prayer is for our life as we journey toward wholeness. Our comfort zones of certainty were challenged while practising the answers to frequently asked questions that occur when introducing meditation.

Each of the 11 participants from across the province of Ontario had prepared two talks on the theme of "Introduction to Christian Meditation." The talks focused on church/parish groups and people of various religious and secular backgrounds. These prepared talks were delivered during the Saturday sessions. To my pure delight, while completing the weekend evaluation form, I found myself writing that the "talks" were the highlight of the weekend. Imagine! The same talks that we were so nervous and apprehensive to share became the best learning tool of all!

The Spirit truly flowed as we shared our unique approach to introducing Christian Meditation in a parish or secular setting.

One of the unexpected bonuses of the weekend was the half hour "stretch and sigh" sessions each morning at 6:45 a.m., led by fellow meditator Casey Rock. These relaxed stretching sessions enhanced the silent times and the learning times for me because not only were my mind and spirit involved but I also had an acute awareness of my body "being" present to the moment.

After a challenging homily (Luke's beatitudes), reconciliation, and redemption through the Eucharist, we were presented with a most beautiful gift - the affirmation that the special gifts we brought to the weekend would be the gifts that we will bring to those we meet on the path of meditation. It is in that strength that we will be able to find the words and opportunities to continue what was started on 13-15 February. Cautiously, I remind you that my experience is just that – mine. Hopefully this profound experience will enable all of the participants to share their gift of meditation ("a pearl of great price") faithfully, thoughtfully, insightfully, and confidently. Most importantly, this transformation will encourage a renewed personal commitment to the twice-daily discipline.

It is my hope that you have caught some of the energy that we felt during this weekend and that you will respond to the nudging, however slight, that God is giving you to share this gift of meditation. He *is* nudging, you know! Do you need some "confidence building" in starting a group? Contact your area convener whose name can be found on the Canadian Christian Meditation Community Website at <http://www.meditatio.ca>, and get the details for a school near you. In joyful closing, may I remind you that even though we are physically distant from each other, we are a growing community of meditators who are united in the Spirit. I thank God for my personal call to pray without ceasing and the wonderful people I have met through the World Community for Christian Meditation!

God's Peace!

Nancy Carson

Note from the Editor

Spring, in Thunder Bay, began tentatively to reveal itself during the last week of May with the emergence of fragrant, delicate, tiny leaves on various plants and trees. Now one week into June, there is some evidence that summer may actually be on its way; the three days or so of warm weather having encouraged the buds on the fruit-bearing trees to slowly unfold and release their mysterious precious blooms for all eyes to behold. That which comes forth with great striving and pain may sometimes be late; nonetheless, it is always anticipated and surely valued by those who can appreciate the process of its development.

I liken our newsletter *News Notes* to the much sought-after summer of Thunder Bay. Being somewhat late, it moans and groans to materialize itself and make itself known. The invested time and energy of its producers can only be justified in the knowledge that *News Notes* is appreciated and desired by its readers. And so we strive to "bloom" with a great editorial team who works diligently to ensure its success. Our newest member to the team, Nancy Carson, has been indispensable in obtaining a treasury of written submissions for this month's newsletter. So read all; enjoy and savour the words contained within its pages.

FROM NATIONAL COORDINATOR

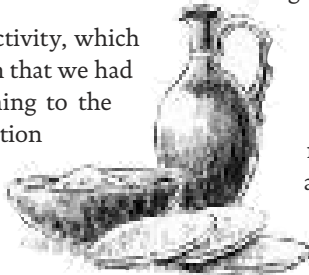
On the Path

When she welcomed us to the week-long silent retreat led by Father Laurence Freeman and Sister Eileen O’Hea in Pierrefonds last fall, Polly Schofield invited us to go for walks on the network of trails in the adjacent park. She added, half jokingly, that we might need a compass to make sure we would find our way back!

Walking in the forest was clearly a contemplative activity, which complemented the four periods of seated meditation that we had experienced every day. Looking at the trees, listening to the sound of the dead leaves under our feet, paying attention to the chickadees flying in a kind of dance - all these aspects created a profound peace. The regular movement gradually became like the rhythm of the mantra that we recite.

When I decided to block that week for the retreat, I anticipated that I would find time to walk; and so it happened that every afternoon, I spent a couple of hours enjoying the park. It rapidly became obvious what Polly meant when she talked about the need for a compass. Some of the trails followed the curves of the different bays; others were meandering in and out of the forest and crossed each other several times. Pleasant as they were, these paths were confusing. I thought that the easiest thing to do was to walk for an hour and then to retrace my steps.

By the fifth day, however, I had developed a certain level of confidence and so I decided to make a loop, connecting different trails together. That would be more exciting, I thought! At one point, I got to a crossroad but was not at all sure which way led back to the Retreat Center. At that precise moment, I was surprised



to hear a voice behind me saying, “I’ve been following you.” To my surprise, it was Sister Eileen who, with a mischievous smile, added, “I hope you know your way back.” It was 3:30 p.m., and she was to give her talk at 4:30 p.m. If we went right, we might be going directly back to the Retreat House... or maybe to the sugar bush. Unfortunately there were no indications, and I had no map! Humbly, I admitted to her that I was as lost as she was and then I added, “The best thing for us to do, so that you’ll be on time for your talk, is to retrace our steps.” Her response came immediately with an intensity that anyone who knows her will recognize, “I HATE BACKTRACKING!” Reluctantly, very reluctantly, we walked back the same way we had come, and, yes, made it on time for her talk!

The rest of the day, and several times during the following weeks, that sentence, “I hate backtracking!” resonated in me; and I began to associate it with the meditation path. Fortunately, on the contemplative pilgrimage, we do not retrace our steps, although it often looks that way. We continue forward, even when it seems that we regress, even when we have this uncomfortable feeling of going in circles. Someone was telling me recently that he saw a T-shirt with these words on it: “Same T-shirt, new day.” Although we may feel that we are stagnating, each meditation is fresh with new life. Every time we meditate, we move forward, we go deeper to the source of life. All that is required is to keep on walking, day after day, meditation after meditation.

Michel Legault
National Coordinator

Benedictine Oblates of the World Community for Christian Meditation

In the 5th century, Benedict of Nursia wrote *A Little Rule for Beginners* (RB 73), which has become a guide for Christians ever since. His teaching is directed towards the following of Christ “with the gospel as our guide” (Prologue). Christian meditation has always been closely associated with Benedict and the Rule. In addition to twice daily meditation, some meditators feel drawn to become Benedictine Oblates of the World Community. The first step in this process is POSTULANCY, which lasts about six months. During this time the person explores reading the Rule and other books about it, to see if it “fits” for them. The second step is

NOVITIATE, which amounts to a year of study and reflection on the Rule with the help of a mentor (another professed Oblate who will journey with the novitiate). The third step is FINAL OBLATION, which is a life-long commitment to live in the spirit of Benedict’s Rule. I will be glad to provide further information upon request. Contact me by phone at 204-338-4601, or by fax at 204-339-8775 or by e-mail at stbens@mts.net, or in writing, at St. Benedict’s Monastery, 225 Masters Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R4A 2A1.

Sr. Hilda Frost, OSB

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Glowing Marks for the P.E.I. School *continued from front page*

knowledge of the history and practice of Christian Meditation. It gave me a better insight of what could be included in an introductory talk and how such a talk could be delivered to sustain the attention of the group. I greatly appreciated the shared storytelling of the Woman at the Well and the Exodus of the Hebrews. We came from different religious and professional backgrounds, and, yet were so near and so ONE in our living God. The entire weekend was a great opportunity to experience and to share what Christian Meditation is doing in our lives and to encourage us on our Journey.

Sr. Rita Poirier, fj, Moncton, NB

The Christian Meditation School was a very worthwhile weekend for me. It helped to deepen my understanding and experience of Christian Meditation. Sharing with others whose journeys differ in some ways but who have the same destination was confirming. The message I interpreted of the Woman at the Well was very meaningful in the realization that this is a gift for all.

Patricia Manning, Charlottetown, PE

The weekend was a marvellous experience, superbly well organized

and facilitated. The location was comfortable and relaxing with few distractions. The structure of early morning meditation, workshop and liturgy worked well. We Irish have an expression, "Anam Chara," which translates as soul or spiritual friend. Spirituality is an essential part of our tradition, especially in the monastic golden age prior to the last millennium of repeated invasion and war. I found it especially helpful to hear other people discuss their personal experience in establishing a practice and leading a group. Interestingly, I was equally encouraged to hear from those who have succeeded in establishing a twice-daily practice. This made me think, "Ah, it is possible; I am not the only one who struggles." I left feeling refreshed and revitalized. The binder I received is an amazing resource. Since I returned home, I have had an unusually busy, stressful few weeks but definitely have been calmer and more hopeful. I continue to struggle to establish a regular practice but now feel confident that I will achieve this long-sought goal.

Mary-Frances Scully, NF

Nova Scotia participants collectively summed up the weekend this way: "During the weekend there was a sense of bonding and enrichment."

Blessings Abound at Surrey B.C. School

On 13-14 May, Rosemary Heights in Surrey, B.C., was the quiet setting for the sixth Canadian School for Christian Meditation. Louise Menard helped us begin our days in a delightful way with "God and the Environment" nature walks. The Rev. Glenda Meakin facilitated a group reflection on several key Scripture stories and then identified some parallels with the Christian Meditation pilgrimage. These were rich with inspirational insights for our own stories and for supporting the path of others who follow the John Main teachings on silent prayer. Michel Legault animated a session on the history of Christian Meditation and, by his presence, brought encouragement to this faith community. Joyce Rogers coordinated the planning for the weekend as well as the warm hospitality enjoyed by the whole group. The "sending

forth" liturgy left us with joy and renewed strength for the task ahead.

Comments from other participants:

One of the blessings was a positive connection with other Christians from different religious cultures.... It gave us in the West a chance to meet the wonderful people involved in the Canadian Christian Meditation Community.... The weekend of learning and meditating together was a profoundly integrating experience for me. I found that my path of meditation was affirmed and that I received a stronger sense of my calling to share the gift of Christian Meditation...

Rita Stang, SMS, and participants CCMC National School

NEWS FROM FAR AND NEAR

BRITISH COLUMBIA

See the article "High Scores for CCMC Schools"

MANITOBA

On 4 February, Sr. Hilda Frost, O.S.B., of St. Benedict's Monastery Winnipeg gave a session on Christian Meditation as part of an Iona Workshop in Winnipeg. On 12-13 March, she gave a workshop on Benedictine Spirituality and Christian Meditation at an Anglican parish in Winnipeg.

ONTARIO

Two New Groups in Eastern Ontario

New groups have started in Barrie's Bay and Deep River in Eastern Ontario. In Deep River, Madelaine Mageau and Chris Tanner ran a 6-week Introduction to Meditation series at St. Barnabas Anglican Church. This weekly series followed the plan in Fr. Laurence Freeman's book *Pearl of Great Price*, which provided an excellent way to teach meditation to newcomers. The group continues to meet Tuesday evenings.

A group lead by Zofia Zawidzka is now meeting in Barrie's Bay every Wednesday evening in her home.

Submitted by Chris Tanner

NEWS FROM FAR AND NEAR

News from St. George's Meditation Group in Pickering Village

The Lenten season began with a retreat day reflecting on the words and music from Margaret Rizza's CD entitled *Silence of the Soul – a Guide to Prayer of the Heart through Words and Music*. The day unfolded in two segments with no set timetable. Before lunch, we reflected on the writings from Julian of Norwich and Catherine of Siena; we meditated and then closed with an adapted prayer from Tom Harpur's book *Prayer the Hidden Fire*. After lunch, we began the inner journey of listening, leaving "self" behind, preparing for prayer, reconnecting with the body, reflecting on words of John Main, John Cassian, Meister Eckhart and scripture. We ended with a silent meditation, seating ourselves around the fireplace. The music and words from the CD greatly enhanced this soulful day.

The second retreat day, *Body, Mind, Spirit & the Labyrinth*, was a blessing in that we were the first group to use the 7-circuit labyrinth in the new St. George's Anglican Worship Centre. There were guided and solitary walks with time for reflection and meditation. The day was loosely structured allowing the spirit and events to flow freely. We ended our day in the centre of the labyrinth to meditate and reflect on four Gospel readings: Matthew 6:6-15, Mark 8:34-35, Luke 18:15-17, and John 14:27. All participants singly exited the labyrinth in silence.

The third retreat day, *Psalms and Daily Sacred Places* (3 April) included morning and night prayer. The focus of the day was connectedness to the presence of God and the daily sacred spaces in our lives enhanced by the reading of Psalms. The theme of mindfulness emerged through the readings, reflections, meditation and various visual effects from other faiths. After lunch we enjoyed a short, silent walk to the historic St. George's Church where we connected the past with the present. Returning in silence to the Worship centre we then reflected on more Psalms ending with Night Prayer and meditation.

Benedictine Spirituality Day

This day was celebrated in the ideal setting of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine Convent in Toronto. As usual the Sisters greeted and treated us with hospitality befitting St. Benedict himself. The topics focused on prayer, wholeness, leisure, obedience and peace. The four short talks included reflections and readings from Joan Chittister's book, *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily - Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today* (parts of Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, and 15 were highlighted). Midday praise with the Sisters led us to silent dinner in the refectory, a pure, prayerful time. Our day continued with discussion, reflection and meditation, ending with the following readings from Joan Chittister's book:

- Give to others whatever they need (RB34). The Benedictine worldview says be gentle with yourself, be gentle with the other, be gentle with the earth.
- Care for the stranger with the best you have (RB61).
- Listen to one another (RB3).
- Be kind of speech to one another (RB31).
- Work for the good of all (RB48).

We were also reminded of a wonderful truth contained in the following tale: "Once upon a time, the story goes, a preacher ran

through the streets of the city shouting, "We must put God into our lives. We must put God into our lives." And hearing him, an old monastic rose up in the city plaza to say, "No sir, you are wrong. You see, God is already in our lives. Our task is simply to recognize that."

Joan Chittister ends her book with the words: "It is to the recognition of God in our lives that the Rule of Benedict calls us." These were powerful words to end our day and lead us into meditation. Clearly, it was a day enjoyed by all, and some of the participants commented that they had experienced the day in a truly Benedictine way.

Peace and love to all, from Marilyn Metcalfe

Pembroke, Ontario Meditation Group

The annual Friday evening/Saturday retreat for members of the Christian Meditation group at the Marguerite Centre in Pembroke was held 13-14 February. We listened to, reflected on and discussed Laurence Freeman's tapes in the series, *A Road to Healing*. This was followed by periods of meditation. There was much deep sharing and expressed commitment to this path of wholeness as a result of insights gained. The membership also enjoyed this time of fellowship and deepening association in the welcoming and nurturing atmosphere of Marguerite Centre.

Fruit of Meditation continues to grow in Scarborough

Located at Ten Washburn Way, the St. Barnabas Christian Meditation group, which had its beginnings as a scripture study group, has been meeting on a regular basis for about 10 years. The scriptural foundation led this group to the silent nature of God and to the practice of Christian Meditation as taught by John Main. The groups' weekly meetings begin with a simple taizé song, followed by a period of silence. Each member of the group then reads the weekly reading of the WCCM website, reading a sentence at a time, deliberately pausing after each sentence. Having shared in the reading and listening, the next fifty minutes is spent sharing reflections on the readings. Noli Mababangloob tells us that "the readings are of course so insightful that we always have a lively and interesting time." After the sharing, the group is ready to sit quietly and meditate for thirty minutes.

After the meeting, there is an opportunity for people to socialize, and it is at that time, as Noli says, that "We get ideas on how to reach out to our community." Some volunteer opportunities include: collecting warm toques, socks and scarves for the homeless, gathering food for the needy, and instituting an adopt-a-family program. The group has also gone on retreats away from the parish setting where the participants had the opportunity to refresh themselves. These experiences have encouraged them to host daylong retreats in their own parish. Their most recent retreat offered in November of 2003 was entitled "Entering the House of Bread: An Advent Spirituality for Daily Life" with Fr. Philip Chircop, S.J. Noli shares these thoughts about the weekend: "The topic stimulated a lot of insight for the participants, resulting in a very lively Question and Answer period! As the bread bakes and slowly rises in silence, we realize the power in the non-spoken

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NEWS FROM FAR AND NEAR *continued from previous page*

word. The poverty of the soul makes a fitting setting for God's presence as Bethlehem was and continues to be a poor town to this day."

"We all know what freshly baked bread is like and how important and refreshing it is to live in the now. Participants in the retreat were given a fresh perspective to advent. For the first time at St. Barnabas, we had early dawn masses (5 a.m.) for nine days before Christmas, and they were attended by some 300 faithful. They came every morning greeting the new dawn. I'm not saying they came because of the retreat day. But I think the retreat day gave them a fresh attitude."

QUEBEC

Oblates Share Time Together

Sunday, 21 March saw the exemplary Benedictine hospitality of Mark and Polly Schofield shine through once again, as they hosted an open oblate meeting in commemoration of the transitus of St. Benedict. The assembly began by listening to Don Myrick read from the Rule, and then to Fr. Laurence Freeman's pre-recorded commentary on the life and work of the Saint. There followed a period of meditation and then... feasting. (Given that this year's observance of St. Benedict's transitus coincided with both Mothering Sunday and the birthday of J.S. Bach, some relaxing of Lenten restrictions in regard to feasting was deemed appropriate.) The spirit was one of celebratory gratitude – gratitude in the knowledge that the meal was savoured with greater delight, the music heard with greater clarity, and friendships enjoyed with a unique lightness and sureness because of a spiritual practice so generously shared.

Kerry Taylor

Good News for Christian Meditators in Quebec

Meditatio, the Canadian Christian Meditation Community's Resource Centre, will be moving to a new location this coming October or November. Our new headquarters will be brighter and more spacious and will have two large rooms, one for the central office and the other for the bookstore. There is a library room on the main floor of the newly renovated building available for larger gatherings and parties. This will bring about a revitalization of the meditation community in the Montreal area, and it may eventually be possible to meditate in our new location every day!

Submitted by Clare Duckworth

ATLANTIC PROVINCES

Cottage Retreats

A couple of years ago in a rural area of Nova Scotia, members of our small meditation group sat together discussing with regret the difficulties of attending retreats in distant major centres. Then ... inspiration! "Why don't we do our own?" was the question asked and so our "cottage retreats" were born.

For our cottage retreats, we follow the format that has been established for other silent retreats. In the absence of a retreat director, we utilize the recorded talks of Dom John Main or Dom

Laurence Freeman. The morning, evening and night prayers are taken from the Liturgy of the Hours and, of course, frequent meditation periods punctuate our silent days.

Planning of the physical environment focuses on the provision of essentials in order to reduce unnecessary distractions. Concerned about too much time spent fussing in the kitchen, we decided to contribute food for our deliberately simple meals, which are taken in silence except for the final "talking lunch." While some participants prefer to sleep at home and return in the morning, others choose to stay overnight in adequate, if not luxurious, sleeping quarters under the eaves. Selected venues offer country walks on cliff-top and beach, in forest and garden or across the aboiteau (reclaimed land from the sea, which is now rich, agricultural land of our valley, built some three hundred years ago by the Acadians).

Our first retreat was a trial run, just one golden October day in a borrowed cottage high on a cliff overlooking the Minas Basin. Last September, one year later, as Hurricane Juan charged up the Atlantic coast – mercifully only touching us as it passed by – our planter's cottage rocked. Morning Prayer was lit by oil lamp, and coffee was brewed on the woodstove. In an inexplicable way, the roaring outside became part of the silence within. Now we plan our next "cottage retreat," and give thanks.

Submitted by the Meditation Group in Annapolis Valley, NS

In Charlottetown, at Mount St. Mary's, a retreat day for Christian Meditators was held on 5 June. Under the guidance of Sr. Kathleen Bolger and Norma Hannouch, twenty-one of the Island's Christian Meditators as well as a visitor from Winnipeg came together for the first time as a collective group and spent a prayer-filled five hours in reflection, sharing, receiving input and relaxing together. It was an enriching experience for all who attended, and it is hoped that this will become an annual event as the summer holidays approach. Many thanks are given to the organizational skill of the two presenters.

Submitted by Grania Scott

Every Tuesday, beginning 14 September, 2004 (9:05 am and 7:15 pm), the regular Christian Meditation group meets at Mount St. Mary's.

For four consecutive Mondays, beginning 13 September, 2004 (7:00 pm), introductory sessions on Christian Meditation will be held at Mount St. Mary's.

Notice of a Book Club

At Mount St. Mary's, we are "dreaming" of beginning a monthly get-together for all Islanders who attended the School. The purpose of this gathering would be to reflect on the wealth of materials that is found in the Resource Handout. If you are interested in this endeavour or wish to obtain more information on any of the Mount St. Mary's happenings, contact Norma Hannouch at 902-566-9829 or Sr. Kathleen Bolger at 902-892-6585, or e-mail kbolger@peimarthas.ca

In Rollo Bay, regular group meetings are held each Sunday evening at 7:00 p.m., at St. Alexis Parish Church. For more info contact Teri Hall, 902-687-3387

In Vernon Bridge, the meditation group meets weekly at St. Andrew's United Church at 10:00 a.m. For more information contact Jeannette Jenkins at 902-651-2827.

Also, see the article, "High scores for CCMC Schools"

OTHER NEWS

Canadian Meditators can help Fijian Meditators

The Fijian Christian meditators are in need of meditation books or tapes that could assist the various group leaders in Fiji and nearby islands to expand the teaching of meditation. Fr. Laurence Freeman and Paul Harris received this message while they were visiting and assisting the ten meditation groups overseen by Fr. Denis Mahony and Sr. Denise McMahon. Send your books, tapes or financial donations to Sr. Denise McMahon at PO Box 3340, Lami, Fiji.

Sister Isobel Page, RSCJ

Sr. Isobel Page RSCJ, Christian Meditator and teacher died in Barat residence 1455 Summer St., Halifax, Monday 5 April 2004 at age 90. The Liturgy of the Resurrection took place on Wednesday, 7 April with Father Albert Cosgrove presiding. The Barat Meditation Group and the World Community of Christian Meditation will deeply miss her. After retirement, Sr. Isobel had worked for a year in the Meditation Centre, London, England. Her teaching career spanned a period of almost fifty years, beginning in the early 1940s. She taught in Sacred Heart schools in Halifax, Montreal and Vancouver. During her long religious life as an educator, she was deeply loved by many students who remembered her fondly as an inspiring teacher and caring Religious. Sr. Kathleen Bolger of PEI sends this comment concerning Sr. Isobel: "I had met Sr. Isobel at Barat Residence in Halifax in 2003. In fact, when I first conceived of having a school

and had sent out an inquiring questionnaire, Isobel had replied she would like to attend if she were healthy." Speaking of the recent school held in PEI, Sr. Kathleen adds, "I'm sure Sr. Isobel was with us in another way from her new home."

Father Henri Tardy

Fr. Henri Tardy, meditator and member of the religious congregation Oblates of Mary Immaculate, died in St. Albert, Alberta on 27 February at age 86. Up to his death, he retained an active interest in the Canadian and international Christian Meditation communities. In 1947, he was assigned to Canada's far north, the Mackenzie Vicariate and a parish on Holman Island where he remained for 35 years until his retirement. In the 1960s, he earned an international reputation in the art world after he encouraged the Inuit native people to preserve their art traditions in the face of a changing world. He established the first Inuit printmaking and lithographic co-operative in 1965 which today is a source of income in Holman for 450 people.

Various experiences during his retirement led him to a life of deeper solitude. In the book *The Heart of Silence: Contemplative Prayer by Those Who Practice It*, Fr. Henry Tardy recalls, "To those whose vocation is the contemplative life, to be in God is to live in the present moment. God's unique gift is this present moment, the sole reality of our world." Later on he states, "Now that I have aged, my physical and mental faculties are disappearing one after the other. Each 'letting go', though, opens a door to the world of silence where the absolute resides, to the world of God which will never end. May your joy and mine be one as I say 'Thank you' to the one who is."

Submitted by Paul Harris

PRACTICALITIES OF PRACTICE

What are the best times to meditate each day?

Morning and evening are the traditional times of prayer in most of the world's religions, including Christianity. The monastic tradition in Christianity starts the day with Matins (morning prayer) and ends the day with Compline (night prayer).

In the morning, nature is usually calm and quiet and brings freshness and renewal. Most people feel that the best time to meditate is immediately after getting up, before eating breakfast and starting the day's activities. John Main felt it was always better to meditate before a meal rather than after. In the morning we place God first in our priorities. Before the outer world calls, there is a call to enter the inner world of stillness.

The evening period of meditation usually presents a greater challenge for most people. Many of us have been involved in the hustle and bustle of the day. Because we all lead such different lives, it is difficult to lay down any general guidelines for the evening time of meditation. Again, if possible, it is desirable to meditate before you eat your evening meal and the digestive process begins.

However, this is not always possible and some people choose a later hour in the evening. Some people are night people and are wide awake and can concentrate in the late evening. For others, a late evening meditation would simply result in sleepiness and nodding off.

Sometimes choosing a time for meditation requires ingenuity. A mother of nine children who meditates finds a magic half hour in mid-afternoon when some of the children are sleeping and the other children have not yet arrived home from school.

If you are tired after the busyness and activities of the day, it might be a good idea to take a quick shower or at least splash water on your face before the evening meditation. Regularity and punctuality are important aspects of morning and evening meditation. For this reason it is a good idea to try and build a regular rhythm and pattern of set times to meditate each day.

Submitted by Paul Harris

Calendar of Events

July 2004

26-28. Burlington, Vermont, USA. *Silent Retreat* led by Fr. Laurence Freeman. Venue: St. Michael's College.
Contact Denis McAuliffe (202-342-0557, djm2@georgetown.edu)

29-01. Burlington, Vermont, USA. *John Main Seminar 2004: Heart of Flesh: A Feminist Spirituality for Women and Men* led by Sr. Joan Chittister, O.S.B. Venue: St. Michael's College.
Contact Patti Gullick (203-438-2440, phgullick@prodigy.net)

August 2004

02-09. Canadian Western Arctic. *One-week pilgrimage to appreciate the wonder of creation.* Depart from Montreal or Edmonton. Registration limited to 15 people.

Contact 1. Lucy Chong (416-429-3499, clucy@interlog.com)
2. Clem Sauvé (416-921-0367, clems@interlog.com)
3. Prasad Gopinath (416-425-5885, prasad@flightsandvacations.com)

September 2004

13. PEI. *Introductory sessions on Christian Meditation.* Venue: Mount St. Mary's. Time: Four consecutive Mondays at 7:00 p.m.
Contact 1. Sr. Kathleen Bolger (902-892-6585, kbolger@peimarthas.ca)
2. Norma Hannouch (902-566-9829)

05. Rollo Bay, PEI. *Regular Meditation Group meeting begins.* Venue: St. Alexis Parish Church. Time: Sunday, 7:00 p.m.
Contact Teri Hall (902-687-3387)

14. PEI. *Regular Meditation Group.* Venue: Mount St. Mary's. Time: Tuesdays 9:05 a.m., & 7:15 p.m.
Contact 1. Sr. Kathleen Bolger (902-892-6585, kbolger@peimarthas.ca)
2. Norma Hannouch (902-566-9829)

Vernon Bridge, PEI. *Regular Meditation Group meeting begins.*
Venue: St. Andrew's United Church. Time: 10:00 a.m.
Contact Jeannette Jenkins (902-651-2827)

October 2004

02. Toronto, ON. *One-day Retreat: Out of the Ordinary: Living ordinary life ... with extraordinary love* led by Thomas Keating, OCSO, and Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Venue: Inn on the Park/Toronto Don Valley Hotel, 1100 Eglinton Ave. East. Time: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Registration: \$80, includes lunch.
Contact (416-691-5660, visit website: <http://www.contemplativeoutreachcanada.org>)

15-17. Châteauguay, QC. *Retraite avec Laurence Freeman, osb au Manoir d'Youville.*
Pour infos (514-525-4649, medchre@bellnet.ca)

16. Waterloo, ON. *"Living Life Whole and Holy: Reflections on Christian Meditation and the Benedictine Way"* series led by The Rev. Glenda Meakin. Dates: 16 Oct., 13 Nov., 2004, 8 Jan., 12 Feb., 12 Mar., 09 Apr. 2005.
Contact Marilyn Malton (519-884-4404 ext. 628, ren-rim@renison.uwaterloo.ca)

19-21. Rouses Point, NB. *Meditation and Compassion Retreat* led by Derek Smith. Venue: 115 Villa Madonna Rd. Registration: \$160.
Contact Villa Madonna Retreat House (506-849-5125, toll free 1-866-783-3300, villa@brunnet.net, visit web site: www.villamadonna.ca)

22-24. Montreal, QC. *English retreat* led by Dom Laurence Freeman, O.S.B. Venue: Near St. Jerome at the Jesuit Retreat House, 45 minutes drive north of Montreal in the Laurentians. Registration: \$160.00.
Contact Magda Jass (514-489-0998, meteor.jass.heritage@qc.aibn.com, fax 514-489-8941)

22-24. Tweed, ON. *Fully Alive - A Christian meditation and yoga event* led by Carol Peterson, Lucie Legault, and Casey Rock, meditators and yoga teachers.
Contact Lucie Legault (819-827-1278, llegalut.smeltzer@videotron.ca)

23. Waterloo, ON. *Seasonal Quiet Day Series: Meditative themes and scripture readings, prayer and reflection* led by The Rev. Glenda Meakin. Venue: Renison Institute of Ministry. Dates: 23 Oct., 04 Dec., 2004, 22 Jan., 5 Mar., 23 Apr. 2005.
Contact Marilyn Malton (519-884-4404 ext. 628, ren-rim@renison.uwaterloo.ca)

26. Gloucester, ON. *Twilight Retreat* led by Dom Laurence Freeman, O.S.B. Venue: The Good Shepherd Parish, 3092 Innes Road. Time: 5:30 - 10:00 p.m.
Contact Ron or Helen McRae (613-841-4698)

27. Toronto, ON. *Twilight Retreat* led by Dom Laurence Freeman, O.S.B.
Contact Clem Sauvé (416-921-0367, clems@interlog.com)

29-31. Victoria, BC. *Retreat* led by Dom Laurence Freeman, O.S.B.
Contact Diane Tolomeo (dtolomeo@uvic.ca)

1-23 February 2005

World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) pilgrimage to India and Sri Lanka. Read the next issue of *News Notes* for further information.
Contact Clem Sauvé (416-921-0367, clems@interlog.com)

Meditatio

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