

Christian Meditation in Canada

NEWS NOTES WINTER 2004 VOL. 13 NO. 4 THE WORLD COMMUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

Yoga-Meditation Retreat *A participant's journal*



Driving along the Canadian Shield, crowned with autumn's glorious colours dazzling in bright sunlight. "Fully Alive" was the name of the weekend retreat to which I was heading. Turning off the highway, I followed the signs to Bridgewater Retreat Centre. The country road soon ended and I pulled into a parking space, opening the window. Looking around I could see cabins nestled among orange red maples alongside tall green pines, with deep blue sky as a backdrop, wow!

A friendly greeting surprised me. "I'm early," I replied. "But we're ready," was the welcoming response. "I'll take your belongings to your room. What's your name? I have a list." Scott the caretaker explained how log cabins had been moved and reconstructed on the property. They were over 150 years old. My "room" was in the loft of "Riverside" cabin and overlooked a quiet reflective pool of the Skootamatta River. "Still water," I thought gratefully, at first glance. How good it felt to be alive and here.

We were a mixed group, some new to meditation, some new to yoga, men and women, of varied age groups. Some came from nearby communities; others had traveled for many hours. Dinner was the first of the delicious homecooked

vegetarian meals we were to relish as the days unfolded. So good I came home with a copy of their cookbook!

Our leaders were skilled at sharing their knowledge with both novice and seasoned practitioners. As our first meditation began Reverend Glenda Meakin explained the basic practice, a benefit to those familiar with yoga but new to meditation, and at the same time an enhancing review for practiced meditators. A straight spine, feet on the floor, (some preferred to sit cross-legged, or kneel on prayer stools) eyes gently closed, repeating our mantra. The suggested one being MARANATHA said in four equal parts. Glenda mentioned returning to our word when thoughts interrupted. She instructed us this was not a practice to be evaluated as poorer or better at the conclusion. Once the time suggested (20-30 minutes) was completed we were to just rise and go on with our regular life.

Casey Rock led our first session of yoga, explaining that often her students related better to the term "stretch and sigh". Yoga comes from the root word 'yuj' which means to yoke, and our weekend would yoke our body, mind and spirit. We

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Yoga-Meditation Retreat *continued from front page*

learned ways in which yoga would enhance our meditation and meditation enrich our yoga practice.

The early risers met Saturday and Sunday pre-dawn with Marilyn Metcalfe for “The Blessing of the Light” prayer and meditation by the welcoming warmth of candlelight. Marilyn had arranged to bring along books, music, and tapes to enable us to return home with new ideas to stimulate ourselves and our weekly groups. We moved to a studio where, as Casey assisted our “stretch and sigh,” we faced an eastern-windowed wall and as we watched dawn break and the gradual coming of light, our bodies were gently coached into greeting this new day. Then Marilyn led us in meditation with carefully chosen poems and thoughts.

Casey’s morning session “Befriending the Body” provided an understanding of how we can sit, our body “deeply rooted”, so that our spine is comfortable, yet we don’t end up with heads nodding on our chests during our meditation time. Indeed, a lesson with positive effects for future meditation times throughout our lives. We were introduced to yoga postures, some of us grateful for the reassurance we would not be asked to make our bodies into pretzels. Carol Peterson’s session “Awakening the Heart” helped us consider our breathing in ways to open our hearts through both yoga and meditation - expanding our minds to new learning and our bodies in exercises that will accompany and challenge us.

We had an evening session of questions and answers where participants could take advantage of the varied expertise of our

leaders. And Lucie Legault led the group in a session of chanting, introducing many of us to music from different cultures around the world - extending our horizons to include new sounds and thoughts in our experience.

The following morning Lucie spoke about “Honouring the Sacred” as she discussed our bodies and the five chakras or places that work with the body’s energy. We moved through a yoga session as we learned these areas and how to recognize and release stress from them - deepening our understanding of the spiritual connection, using them as a way of developing a grounded spirituality.

Glenda had invited each of us to bring a gift from “Mother Earth” to present as an offering during the Eucharist that would conclude our morning. Gathering these gifts helped focus our gratitude as we prepared ourselves for this sacred session. Our reading came from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 7 - Jesus at the home of Simon the Pharisee. As we retold the story Glenda connected it to our lessons of body, mind and spirit over this time together. Gifts of rocks, branches, flowers, leaves, pine cones, seedpods, and water were placed at our altar. We broke bread for one another and passed the cup celebrating our connectedness.

We had observed a “social silence” during meals, but over lunch at the end many held animated conversations. Parting was elongated ...reluctantly we wished one another “safe home”.

- Pat Deacon

In Memoriam

Sheila Watson – April 30, 1925–August 5, 2004.

Christian Meditation Community of Toronto (CMCT)

Sheila died peacefully after a long and courageous struggle with cancer. She leaves behind her husband William (Bill), her daughter Mary-Jean, her sons Scott and Peter and their families and a wide circle of friends.

Sheila and Bill led a weekly Christian Meditation group in their home in Ajax for the past 25 years at which all were welcome. She handled registrations for the John Main Seminar 1993, held in Toronto, and for numerous CMCT annual weekend retreats in subsequent years, while Bill served as Treasurer for these events. We will miss Sheila’s steadying hand and her wise counsel but we know that she remains with us in spirit.

– CMCT Coordinating Group

Dorothy Deakin, Canadian Meditation leader, dead at 82

Dorothy, a member of the Canadian Christian Meditation Community and a retired pioneer speech/language pathologist living in Kelowna, British Columbia, died October 1 of a stroke at the age of 82.

Dorothy participated in Christian meditation group meetings in Kelowna, and took an active interest in the Canadian Christian Meditation Community. She was one of the 60 contributors to

the book *The Heart of Silence: Contemplative Prayer By Those Who Practise It*, in which she recounted her lifetime interest in meditation. In this book she pointed out that she experienced a greater understanding and a deepening of her Christian faith as a result of her involvement in the Eastern meditation tradition and that she looked forward to the day when the commonalities of all the world’s religions would be realized by humankind everywhere in the cosmic Christ.

– Paul Harris

Sister Alice Trudeau, a Missionary Oblate Sister of St. Boniface, Manitoba

Sister Alice passed away on October 27, 2004, in Nairobi, Kenya where she was hospitalized after suffering a massive stroke two weeks earlier in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Alice was an ardent meditator ever since she spent three weeks at the Benedictine Monastery in Montreal in the late 1970s, where she met Father John Main and Father Laurence Freeman. She initiated the meditation group at the mother house of the Missionary Oblate Sisters in Winnipeg in the early 1980s, and was instrumental in introducing many people to Christian Meditation.

With deep appreciation, we ask for your prayers for Sister Alice, her Sisters, and the people she served with so much love

– Sister Dora Tetreault, MO

Meditation as Path

Food for the Journey

Imagine yourself setting out on a hike. The crisp morning invites you; solitude and stillness surround you. The long path ahead opens up, you search the map but there is no arrow marked 'You Are Here'. You start walking and the way opens up. Here, seemingly lifeless cattails suddenly surprise you with movement because you have taken the time to see them; over there, a great blue heron, alert and motionless, is indistinguishable from the rock. Along the way a few healthy trees have been cleared to create an even more magnificent view. You walk the path, discover the journey and, returning, find the map is making sense.

Arriving on the Path

Walking on the Path

Staying on the Path

Sharing the Path.

These themes formed the journey of the Meditation Workshop held at St Peters Church in Winnipeg on Oct 30. About 40 people from Winnipeg and beyond gathered to share the path together. The workshop was inspiringly and creatively led by Michel Legault, the National Coordinator of the Canadian Christian Meditation Community.

Drawing on experiences of hiking in Europe and North America, Michel used anecdotes to draw parallels illustrating the rich quotations from John Main's writings. Through Michel's stories we journeyed in Italy and Scotland, walked the Pembrokeshire coast in Wales, ran down sand dunes, and discovered the Gatineau Hills.

Quotations from John Main's writings supplied the 'Food for the Journey'. "What each of us must learn in the experience of our own



meditation is that the power for the pilgrimage is in fact inexhaustibly present within us," writes John Main. "The important thing to remember is that one faltering but actual step is more valuable than any number of journeys performed in the imagination ... and as we follow the pilgrimage we discover that the stream will take us beyond time, beyond all division, and beyond all limitation into the now ... into the infinite liberty of God."

Lacing up our walking boots to take 'actual but faltering steps' were several of us who were newcomers to meditation. We discovered the milestones of John Main's life and call to meditation. The practicalities of getting started, of addressing distractions, and the encouragement of participating in group meditation were some of the topics discussed, with wisdom shared by those who are further along the path. In silence and stillness we meditated.

"This is a wonderful piece of timing," said Michael from St. Ignatius Parish, "After receiving

shocking news today, I have walked into an environment that is gentle and sustaining. It feels strongly unifying and so different from the fragmenting of life. I am encouraged to take this up as a practice." Margaret from St Aidan's Church has been meditating for eight years - "It is like the soles of my feet, it goes with me everywhere."

Leaving the workshop with the rich imagery of the meditative journey and with quotations from John Main's writing in my hand, I reflect again on my own map. I realize the day has shed a new light on my journey; I find myself excited and grateful.

– Fenella Temmerman

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FROM NATIONAL COORDINATOR

On the Path

Last year, while in Iqaluit for my work, I took some time to explore the wilderness of the north in Sylvia Grinnell Park. This is a land of raw and desert-like beauty, with only some small shrubs surviving on the permafrost. From the trail on the rock, the view of Frobisher Bay and its shores is impressive: wide, open, bare, silent. In a similar way, I got to discover the paths on Cabot Trail, appreciating this magnificent reddish shoreline where powerful waves come and break. A few years ago, while in Edmonton, I added a couple of days in order to walk and bike in the Rockies: the majestic masses of grey rock with their peaks still covered with snow offered magical views, what a treat! Nature is an incredible place to connect with the divine all around us, a mysterious presence that has infinitely various shapes.

Whenever I discover another beautiful part of Canada, my first feeling is one of great joy and excitement. However, it is often followed by a vague experience of lacking loyalty to my part of the country! As if allowing myself to enjoy the magical nature in Alberta, Nunavut or Nova Scotia would minimize my capacity to appreciate what is taking place right in my backyard. None of that ambivalence was present last week as I was walking in Gatineau Park, only 30 minutes from home. On that mid-October sunny day, the maple trees were giving all the red that they could. With yellow poplars and bright green firs in the background, this was a glorious scene. I immersed myself totally in the fireworks provided

by nature. Somehow, in a mysterious way, my capacity to appreciate the Cabot Trail, Sylvia Grinnell Park or the Rockies increased my sense of awe at our fall colours, rather than diminished them. Having discovered the beauty somewhere else didn't trivialize the one I was connected with back home.

This personal experience could be a metaphor for our next National Conference to take place in Ottawa, June 2005, under the title: "Bridges and Boundaries: Friends and Neighbours on the Paths to the Centre". During this weekend we will explore other spiritual traditions, appreciate their richness and see their connection with Christian meditation: Hinduism, Buddhism, native spirituality, Eastern tradition, women mystics of the Middle Ages, yoga. It will be an opportunity to explore, to expand and, paradoxically, to better understand the riches of our pilgrimage by letting other traditions shed light on it.

Huston Smith once said, "If you only know your own religious tradition, you don't really know it." This nugget of wisdom is always a timely reminder for each one of us: as we get more rooted in our practice, that which brings us to life, we also become more aware that there is much to be gained by being attentive to other pilgrims. Whether we attend the National Conference or not, the invitation is the same: go wider in order to go deeper in the absolute mystery.

– Michel Legault

Practicalities of Practice

How can I stop my busy-ness and then do nothing?

When we first "try" meditating even daily for a while (and also after years because we are never fully silent) there may still be confusion about what we are trying to do.

Some in exasperation may utter "I cannot do nothing for 20-30 minutes straight!"

When we become clearer about what we are doing... the *how to do it* falls into place.

So, what are we trying to do? We slow down for a time of being, not doing. We are totally available to be loved.

John Main's own introductory prayer to start meditation is an excellent summary of what we are doing. "Heavenly Creator, open my heart to the silent presence of the Spirit of Your Son. Lead me

into that mysterious silence where your love is revealed to all who call Maranatha. Come Lord Jesus."

Simply, it is a time for being with our Loving Creator inside our own heart. Jesus said, "If anyone loves me ...we will come to her/him and make our home with her/him." What an offer! If we only realized this – would we say "Oh, sorry I am too busy, I am preoccupied with my 'to do' list or my own thinking." Rather, in silent attentiveness, we are to be... totally available to God's love. God is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our part is to be available.

To be totally available to be loved is so worthwhile. It is totally opposite to doing nothing!

– Tom Cain, CCMC Meditator, Lethbridge, Alberta

News Notes Announcement

After a two-year term as editor of the CCMC News Notes, Louisa Pedri is moving on to other projects. We thank her for having put her love and knowledge of the English language to the service of the Canadian Christian Meditation Community. Gratitude!

Nancy Carson, who assisted Louisa for the past two issues, has accepted the invitation to coordinate the production of the publication. Nancy's enthusiasm and organizational skill will

serve us well as she continues to be responsible for maintaining the connection between the different parts of the Canadian Christian Meditation Community. Joy Gordon, long-time meditator and member of the Christian Meditation Community of Toronto, joins the editorial team as the copy editor for the winter and spring issues. The CCMC Council welcomes Joy to the News Notes team.

– Michel Legault, National Coordinator

NEWS FROM FAR AND NEAR

ONTARIO

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION: CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER FOR A NEW GENERATION. THEY KEPT COMING

On September 20, the meditation group at St. Mary's Parish in Ottawa had the privilege of hosting an evening featuring Paul Harris as the guest speaker. Our group is very small, and we were hoping to explain meditation to people who were not familiar with this way of praying, and who might be interested in joining our group. We had no idea how many would attend. The room is fairly small, comfortably holding about 20-25 people. By 7:30 p.m. we had about 50 people in the room, and more were coming. I was in a panic, but Paul was very calm and said, "We will just wait and see what happens." It all worked out, as Paul was sure it would, and the evening was a tremendous success.

In his talk, Paul emphasized the importance of silence and stillness in prayer. He quoted several readings from Scripture, and also quoted from various saints, including a beautiful story of Mother Teresa. She said, "Jesus is always waiting for us in silence. In this silence he listens to us; it is there that he speaks to our souls. And there, we hear his voice." Paul also addressed the topic of intercessory prayer, using the words of Jesus who said, "Your father knows what you need before you ask him." All our petitions for ourselves and for others can be brought before the Lord in a matter of seconds as we begin our meditation. He spoke of the fruits of meditation – love, joy, peace, patience, self-control, kindness, and compassion for others.

It was so wonderful to have Paul come and speak to us, and I went home that night grateful for his talk, grateful for the wonderful turnout, and especially grateful for the gift of meditation in my own life.

– Marilyn Sugden, St. Mary's Parish, Ottawa, Ontario

CATHOLIC DEACONS IN ARCHDIOCESE OF OTTAWA
ATTEND SPIRITUALITY SEMINAR

At the invitation of Archbishop Marcel Gervais, Derek Smith and Paul Harris held a half-day Christian Meditation spirituality seminar, September 18, at Assumption parish, for Catholic deacons in the Archdiocese of Ottawa.

Derek gave a talk on the theology of contemplative spirituality and Paul spoke on the teaching and practice of Christian Meditation. The session included a period of meditation. Handouts and books on Christian Meditation were available to participants. It is the hope of both Derek and Paul that some deacons will join the various Ottawa groups or lend their support to the practice in the parishes to which they are assigned.

– Paul Harris

MONTHLY TEACHING MEETINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY OF TORONTO (CMCT) HAVE MOVED TO KNOX COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, 59 ST. GEORGE STREET

The concept of 'Impermanence' is the first of the Buddha's Four Noble Truths – things are constantly changing and evolving!

We are very grateful to University College for having let us host our monthly teaching meetings at Croft Chapter House for the past 15+ years. With regret, they informed us in the spring of 2004 that because of the double cohort of students they will be requiring all their available space for the upcoming 2004-2005 school year.

After a period of discernment and consultation it was decided to approach Knox College. In the late 80s/early 90s we used to have our monthly Benedictine Oblate meetings there and on at least one occasion we held our monthly teaching meeting with Fr. Laurence in the College Chapel. We are happy to report that we reached an agreement with the administration of Knox College and they are equally happy to be able to accommodate us. The meetings will be in Room # 4 on the ground floor and will continue to be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on the last Thursday of each month. For more information about the 2005 monthly meeting schedule contact Joy Gordon by email <joyg@simpatico.ca> or tel. 416-485-9718.

– CMCT Newsletter (September 2004)

AUTUMN QUIET DAY IN WATERLOO

"But God hath made no decree to distinguish the seasons of his mercies. In heaven it is always Autumne, his mercies are ever in their maturity...God comes to thee, not as in the dawning of the day, not as in the bud of spring, but as the Sun at noone to illustrate all shadowes, as the sheaves in harvest, to fill all penuries. All occasions invite his mercies, and all times are his seasons." – John Donne (1624).

A small, yet attentive, group of meditators gathered in the fall of 2004 for the first in a series of Seasonal Quiet Days to be held at Renison College, Waterloo, Ontario. Using the above quote from John Donne as a guide, Rev. Glenda Meakin, retreat leader and member of the CCMC Council, led the group into three meditation periods with introductory talks on the theme of "God's Abundance". Each of Glenda's gentle talks ('Perspectives', 'An Alternative Vision', 'Making the Connections') flowed with scripture, John Main's teachings, Fr. Laurence's writings, illustrative life stories and nourishing music.

Encouraged by Glenda's opening suggestion, I treated the day as a silent retreat, choosing to spend the break times in solitude. However, I never felt alone. In fact, quite the opposite! How joyful it was to silently share the day with fellow meditators knowing they too were intentionally taking time apart. Thank you Glenda, for leading us on this journey of God's abundant love. Thank you for reminding us that God's abundance cannot be measured, boxed or kept to the size of a 10" frying pan! Christ came so that we might have life and have it abundantly. For me, the daily practice of meditation keeps me centred in that hope-filled truth.

– Quiet Day participant in Southwestern Ontario

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

SHARING THE GIFT IN CHARLOTTETOWN

Four introduction sessions on Christian Meditation were held at Mount St. Mary's, Charlottetown in September.

Continued on next page

News from Far and Near *continued from previous page*

Here are some of the comments received as feedback:

Sr. Laura McCabe: "I really enjoyed the 'teachings' on Christian Meditation. I believe the video 'Coming Home' concluded with '... in silence we truly find God.' It was the silence and peacefulness of the group which inspired me, in fact, it awed me."

Faye Perry: "I found the John Main talks which preceded our periods of meditation very inspiring and helpful, especially the one about climbing the mountain. Each time I listened to one of his tapes, it left me wanting to hear more."

Some other thoughts from the evaluation forms:

"The meditation sessions were special and the talks encouraged me to include meditation in my life. I was inspired by the gentleness and peace reflected on the faces of the speakers and I felt it must have come from their practice."

"I feel meditation will be helpful to me in my life. I found the sessions meaningful in that I felt encouraged to practice this way of prayer. Meditation seems to be a simple and sure way of living in the presence of God, in Reality, in the now – a coming to know God and self."

"I learned that meditation simplifies prayer and we really do need simplicity in our lives. I enjoyed the video 'Coming Home' which gave me the added incentive to practice this way of prayer."

– Kathleen Bolger

SOURIS, PEI CM GROUP WELCOMES NEW PEOPLE TO CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

The Souris, PEI meditation group offered an Introduction to Christian Meditation program and welcomed 12 new members to the group. It was interesting to hear current group members present their 'personal testimonies' on how the practice of daily meditation has affected their lives in such uplifting ways.

The group leader used the Practicalities of Practice column from the Autumn 2004 Newsletter, which posed the question, "Should

I even begin or should I wait until my life calms down a little?" All participants expressed a sigh of relief to know that the important thing is 'just to begin'. We are hopeful that all new members will continue with us on the journey of meditation.

– Teri Hall, meditation group leader

NEW BRUNSWICK

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION RETREAT WITH REV. DEREK SMITH
IN ST. JOHN, NB

Villa Madonna Retreat House held its annual Christian Meditation Retreat, mid-week October 19-21, 2004. The theme "Meditation and Compassion", presented by Derek Smith from Ottawa, was extremely well received. The 27 participants included Sister Kathleen Bolger, Atlantic Coordinator for the Christian Meditation community. Sister Anastasia Young, Spiritual Program Director of Villa Madonna and Regional Coordinator of Meditation for New Brunswick organized and promoted the retreat throughout the Maritime Provinces.

Evaluations from retreatants praised the sessions by Derek as "very well prepared and organized. Presentations were casual and calm in a way that one felt at one with the presenter." "They were easy to follow because of the simplicity, yet challenging on deep personal levels." "The liturgies were prayerful and meshed well with the meditations that followed." And to reveal a more subjective comment: "I have become aware of and appreciative of the deep current of mystical searching in the Christian tradition."

Participants also appreciated the fact that as an Oblate of St. Benedict, a permanently ordained deacon and a meditator, Derek's presentations were well researched and spirit-guided. They were moved by his sincerity, spontaneity, humour and love of the ordinary. His answers during sharing sessions and questions periods were comprehensive and sensitive.

The next Christian Meditation Retreat will be at Villa Madonna in July 2005. Date and presenter will be announced early in the coming year.

Care of the Terminally Ill – 15th International Congress

An explosion of 'Spirituality' is symptomatic of the Zeitgeist of our age – at least in the Western World. The spiritual aspect of our humanity has always been consciously acknowledged in the East.

Case in point... The 15th International Congress on the Care of the Terminally Ill, organized by Dr. Balfour Mount, and presented by the Palliative Care Division, Department of Medicine and Oncology of McGill University. For the past six conferences I have made meditation and a quiet room available for the delegates. The meditation, preceded by a short talk, was scheduled at 7 a.m. – much too early in the morning, after a jam-packed exciting and exhausting day for this international group (doctors, nurses, volunteers, other hospice and health care professionals) to attend.

At the congresses of the 1980s, three or four people would come regularly each day, and in the 90s the number of attendees climbed

to around ten. During these four-day events, there have always been a few workshops dealing with spiritual topics. This year, spiritual and trans-cultural topics abounded. The final workshop I attended was entitled 'The Dark Night of the Soul'.

This trend toward the spiritual was reflected in the number of people, from many parts of the world and cultures, who came to meditate, barely after sunrise... each day; they returned and new people came... They expressed such hunger, not only with regard to their patients, but for their own personal journey as well.

It seems to me that the spiritual aspect of our personhood has finally come to be acknowledged as one of the main components of human health – human holiness.

– Polly Schofield, Montreal

Fr. Laurence meets Meditation Communities across Canada

Fr. Laurence Freeman, OSB, Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation, visited three provinces, eight cities during his Fall 2004 visit. He travelled to Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia to speak and participate in twilight and weekend retreats, public conferences and Oblate receptions into the World Community for Christian Meditation. The following contributions are some highlights from Fr. Laurence's time spent in Ontario.

OBLATES – Celebration in Ottawa

On October 26, 2004, in Ottawa, Elisabeth Burrill, Deborah Poitras, Laurie Grice and Dolores Bahen had the great privilege of being received by Fr. Laurence Freeman as Benedictine Oblates of the World Community for Christian Meditation. Helen and Ron McRae made this day very special by generously opening their home to us, and serving a wonderful luncheon following the oblation ceremony.

We truly felt God's embrace, in the warm bright sunshine of this beautiful fall day, as we answered His call. In our hearts we had already made this commitment to the Rule of St. Benedict and to our daily meditations, and were delighted to share this with the Ottawa Oblate community.

In the presence of God and with the witness of St. Benedict, Fr. Laurence received our final oblation into "the school of the Lord's service." Throughout this simple and moving ceremony, we felt the love and support of those members of the Oblate community in attendance – Paul Harris, Don Myrick, Marion Charbonneau, Ron McRae, and Sophie Zawidzka. Novice Pat Cher and Helen McRae also offered their smiling encouragement to the candidates. Feelings of gratitude and joy filled us to have these experienced and generous companions at this important stage of our journey. The presence of our husbands – who show their love and support by patiently "enduring" our meditation times – increased our love for them immeasurably.

After a thoughtful and enlightening reflection by Father Laurence, he prayed: "May the Lord bring to completion the good work begun in you". Following this truly wonderful lunchtime experience, we were able to attend Fr. Laurence's Twilight Retreat and to water the seed of meditation in an even larger community gathering. We were truly blessed by the gifts God offered us on this remarkable day.

- Dolores Bahen, newly received Benedictine Oblate

Celebration in Toronto

On October 27, I was welcomed into the World Community for Christian Meditation as a Novice Oblate by Father Laurence Freeman, who was giving a talk on Benedictine Spirituality at St. Basil's Church in Toronto. With me was Marilyn Metcalfe, whom we fondly refer to as "the prioress", and who is also my cherished mentor for my years ahead. The day was particularly special for me, because Marilyn made her final oblations at the same time that I made my commitment. Father Laurence spoke beautifully about the precepts of Obedience, Stability and Conversion as central to the Rule of St. Benedict, and I winked mischievously at Marilyn – she knows she has her work cut out with me when it comes to obedience! Among us were cherished friends, family and the loving

community of which we are all a part. Guided by the wisdom of my mentor, the teaching and love of the larger Community, and the practice of meditation, I have turned my attention to Christ at the centre, and ask for the support of my brothers and sisters in this year of discernment and deeper conversion of life through faith. PAX.

– Carolyn Kennedy, newly received Novice Benedictine Oblate

Ottawa Twilight Retreat with Fr. Laurence

Approximately 140 members of the Ottawa Christian Meditation Community joined Father Laurence Freeman the evening of October 26, 2004. It had been some time since his busy schedule allowed a visit to the area and it was eagerly anticipated. Fr. Laurence did not disappoint.

He drew lessons from the gospel story of Jesus' visit with Martha and Mary. Martha was angry and stressed getting a meal while her sister Mary sat listening to Jesus. When Martha directed her anger at Jesus by asking him to get Mary to help with the meal he gently admonished her for being too preoccupied with material distractions while Mary's focus on the spiritual was "the better part".

Fr. Laurence drew an interesting lesson from this story, suggesting that we have Martha (material) and Mary (spiritual) dimensions within us that need to be kept in balance.

Other points shared during the talk and question period:

– Our goal is no less than to attain the kingdom of heaven, union with God, which can also be translated from the Greek to mean "the reign of God". The kingdom of heaven is in a mysterious way both in and among us. In this sense it is 'relational' as expressed by following the teaching and example of Jesus, by our loving and peaceful relations with others as well as inner peace.

– Meditation is compatible with other forms of prayer (e.g. Ignatian, charismatic, vocal) and shares the goal, which is within each of us, of entering more fully into Jesus' ongoing prayer to the Father. Its fruits are inner and outer peace,

– The mantra calls us from distractions, which are often frequent, to attention which is an essential aspect of love. Love requires attention and a fruit of meditation is greater love of ourselves and others.

– All of us, whether new or long-time meditators, are beginners since every meditation is a new beginning.

On the topic "Why meditate?", Fr. Laurence told a touching story of how a Brazilian father responded to his young daughter when she became irritated and asked this question, because he was

Continued on next page

Calendar of Events

Note: For timely updates please refer to the Meditatio website at www.meditatio.ca/news/updates. Know of an event not listed? You will find a user-friendly form to submit additions at www.meditatio.ca/Forms/EventForm.html.

February 2005

12 Feb., Waterloo, Ontario. Session Four of *Walking Through Life Whole and Holy – Reflections on the Benedictine Way* led by the Rev. Glenda Meakin. Venue: Renison College, University of Waterloo, 240 Westmount Road North, Waterloo. Time: 10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon. Registration: Marilyn Malton at 519-884-4404 X628 or email <ren-rim@renison.uwaterloo.ca>. You are welcome to join any or all of these sessions, no previous attendance necessary.

March 2005

5 Mar., Waterloo, Ontario. *Lenten Quiet Day of Meditation and Reflection* led by the Rev. Glenda Meakin. Venue: Renison College, University of Waterloo, 240 Westmount Road North, Waterloo. Time: 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Registration: Marilyn Malton at 519-884-4404 X628 or email <ren-rim@renison.uwaterloo.ca>.

The Seasonal Quiet Day Series for prayer and reflection is offered by the Renison Institute of Ministry with the generous support of the Deanery of Waterloo, Anglican Church of Canada.

12 Mar., Waterloo, Ontario. Session Five of *Walking Through Life Whole and Holy – Reflections on the Benedictine Way* led by the Rev. Glenda Meakin. Venue: Renison College, University of Waterloo, 240 Westmount Road North, Waterloo. Time: 10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon. Registration: Marilyn Malton at 519-884-4404 X628 or email <ren-rim@renison.uwaterloo.ca>. You are welcome to join any or all of these sessions, no previous attendance necessary.

April 2005

North Bay, Ontario. *Sharing the Gift: A School for Teachers Weekend.* For date and location please contact the Rev. Glenda Meakin at 519-273-4187 or email <meakin@cyg.net>.

9 April, Waterloo, Ontario. Session Six of *Walking Through Life Whole and Holy – Reflections on the Benedictine Way* led by the Rev. Glenda Meakin. Venue: Renison College, University of Waterloo, 240 Westmount Road North, Waterloo. Time: 10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon. Registration: Marilyn Malton at 519-884-4404 X628 or email <ren-rim@renison.uwaterloo.ca>. You are welcome to join any or all of these sessions, no previous attendance necessary.

23 April, Waterloo, Ontario. Easter Quiet Day of Meditation and Reflection led by the Rev. Glenda Meakin. Venue: Renison College, University of Waterloo, 240 Westmount Road North, Waterloo. Time: 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Registration: Marilyn Malton at 519-884-4404 X628 or email <ren-rim@renison.uwaterloo.ca>.

The Seasonal Quiet Day Series for prayer and reflection is offered by the Renison Institute of Ministry with the generous support of the Deanery of Waterloo, Anglican Church of Canada.

May 2005

6-8 May, Calgary, Alberta. *Sharing the Gift: A School for Teachers Weekend* led by the School for Teachers' resource team. Venue: FCJ Christian Life Centre, 219-19th Avenue, Calgary AB. Contact: Tom Cain 403-327-3365 or email <tomcain@shaw.ca>.

June 2005

10-12 June, Orangeville, Ontario. *CMCT (Christian Meditation Community of Toronto) Annual Weekend Retreat.* Theme: Meditation and Testimony: Reflections on the ways Christian meditation enables us to live an authentic testimony to God's love and presence in the world. Venue: St. Francis Centre, Orangeville. Leader: the Rev. Glenda Meakin. Contact: Joy Gordon 416-485-9718 or email <joyg@sympatico.ca>.

17-19 June, Orleans, Ontario. *2005 Canadian National Conference Bridges and Boundaries: Friends and Neighbours on the Paths to the Centre.* Venue: La Maison Notre-Dame-de-la-Providence. Contact: Helen or Ron McRae at 613-841-4698 or <wccmottawa@sympatico.ca>. Registration form found on page 11 of this issue.

24-25 June, St. John's, Newfoundland. *Christian Meditation Retreat Weekend* led by the Rev. Glenda Meakin. Contact: Barbara Dick (709) 722-4561 or email <bdick@avint.net>

August 2005

8-11 August, Thousand Oaks, California, USA. *The John Main Pre-Seminar Silent Retreat: Light and Dark: The Way of Unity* led by Dom Laurence Freeman OSB, director of the World Community for Christian Meditation. Venue: California Lutheran University. For further information about the Retreat and Seminar, email Pat Mitchell at <pmitchell@stjohnsem.edu> or visit the international web site at <www.wccm.org>. Registration is available through the website or by calling toll free 1-877-285-6809

11-14 August, Thousand Oaks, California, USA. *The John Main Seminar 2005: A Lever and a Place to Stand* led by Father Richard Rohr. Venue: California Lutheran University. For further information about the Seminar, email Pat Mitchell at <pmitchell@stjohnsem.edu> or visit the international web site at <www.wccm.org>. Registration is available through the website or by calling toll free 1-877-285-6809.

Fr. Laurence in Canada *continued from previous page*

ending their play time to go and meditate. Momentarily stunned by the question he found words that seemed to come to him from he knew not where. He replied, "Because I want to be like you," which seemed to fully satisfy his little daughter.

The evening included a question period, refreshments and a tape and book display. Without naming names, a sincere thanks to all who did so much to make this an enriching and pleasant evening.

– Archie Boyd, a long-time Ottawa area meditator and weekly group leader

The Canadian National Resource Centre has moved



Members of the Saturday group helping with the final packing. Audrey Booth – second right – managed the NRC until June of this year.



Thom Powis and Dominic Schofield helping with some of the heavy moving.

New location:
 5964 ave. Notre Dame de Grace,
 Suite 208, Montreal
 New telephone number: 514 485-7928.
 Postal address is unchanged.
 A grand opening will take place in the
 New Year.



Main entrance to the Wesley Community Centre – the NRC is on the second floor of the building to the right.



New bookstore still in boxes



Polly Schofield and a display for the opening of the Community Centre

The new office; just the furniture

New publications available from Meditatio



A Simple Way

Meditation is a pilgrimage to your own centre, to your own heart. In this little book Laurence Freeman shows us *A Simple Way* of reaching that centre, gently leading us to the path that shows us how to find that central stillness which is the source of all.

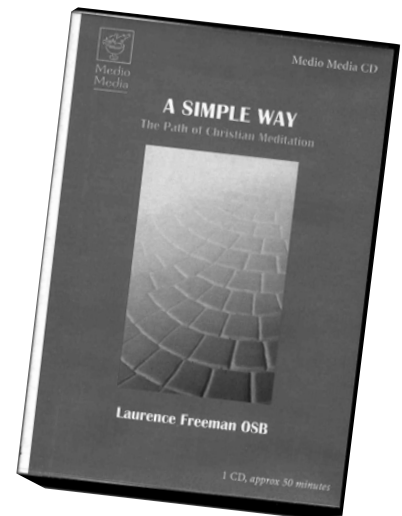
43 pages soft cover. Price \$14.00

A Simple Way

An audio recording of a talk by Laurence Freeman presenting the basic teaching of Christian Meditation in a clear and profound manner. The talk touches on how to meditate, saying your mantra, times of meditation, distractions and preparing to meditate.

Duration of the talk: 30 minutes followed by 20 minutes of silence and an ending prayer.

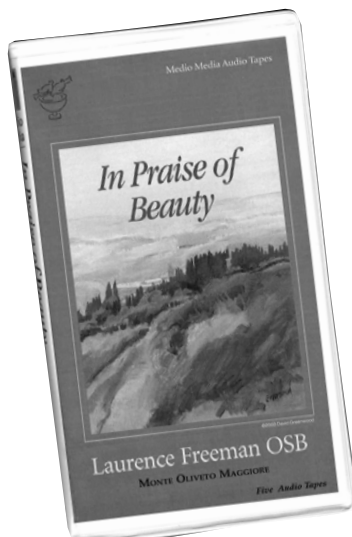
Price: CD \$14.00, Cassette \$12.50



In Praise of Beauty

The art of paying attention – to anything – reveals to us its true beauty and this is the work of our meditation. In these talks, given at the annual retreat at Monte Oliveto, we come to understand that we can accept our own intrinsic beauty as made in the image and likeness of God.

Price: CD \$57.00, Cassette \$46.00



ORDER FORM ON BACK COVER

CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION CONFERENCE

June 17-19, 2005

*Bridges and Boundaries:
Friends & Neighbours on the Paths to the Centre*

Our community gathers for talks, workshops and celebration at La Maison Notre-Dame-de-la-Providence in Orleans (Ottawa).

Fr. Laurence Freeman, OSB will give the keynote address. Workshop sessions explore such topics as Christian Meditation in relation to Hinduism, Buddhism, yoga, medieval women mystics, Native spirituality, and the Hesychast tradition.

- Registration, including meals and a single room with shared bath, is \$225.00.
- A few non-resident (meals only) registrations are available for \$170.00.
- Registration is on a “first-come, first served” basis, and the deadline for receipt of registration forms with payment is Monday, May 9.
- Your cheque payable to “Ottawa Christian Meditation” must accompany the form.

Send the form below with your currently dated cheque to:

OTTAWA CHRISTIAN MEDITATION, 2170 Auburn Ridge Drive, Orleans, Ontario K1W 1H8.

For additional information contact Helen or Ron McRae at (613) 841-4698 or wccmottawa@sympatico.ca



Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Are you vegetarian? YES NO

I enclose a separate donation of \$ _____ to assist another meditator to attend the conference

Order Form

Title	Price	Qty	Total
A Simple Way (book)	\$14.00	_____	_____
A Simple Way CD	\$14.00	_____	_____
A Simple Way Cassette	\$12.50	_____	_____
In Praise of Beauty CD	\$57.00	_____	_____
In Praise of Beauty cassette	\$46.00	_____	_____
	Subtotal	_____	_____
	Postage add 10%	_____	_____
	Total	_____	_____

Make cheques payable to Meditatio.

Address: Same as below

Or: Name: _____

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I would like to receive the newsletter

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