

Christian Meditation in Canada

NEWSNOTES WINTER 2005 VOL. 14 NO. 4 THE WORLD COMMUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATION



25-YEAR CELEBRATION

Tucked away in a secluded bend beside the Elbow River near the center of Calgary, Alberta, the FCJ Christian Life Centre has just celebrated 25 years of providing people with a quiet home where they can go on retreat, hear gifted speakers, or take courses on a myriad Christian and religious topics. It is an oasis in the middle of a busy city that has enriched the lives of people of all religious backgrounds.

Calgarians have been particularly blessed in that the FCJ Centre has also, for all those years, provided a venue where Christians could rediscover and explore the rich contemplative tradition of Christian meditation, and where its message could be spread.

Fr. Laurence Freeman, Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation, at a meditation weekend in June, was particularly impressed by the warmth of the welcome that he and all participants received at the Centre. He commented that such a resource was, in his experience, very unique.

Engeline Piet, much loved teacher of meditation and spiritual guide, has used the facilities of the Centre to give monthly introductory talks on Christian meditation, conduct regular meditation retreats, and hold drop-in meditation sessions. It has been a labour of love for Engeline, as anyone who knows her will understand. That there are now at least seven meditation groups meeting regularly in Calgary and one each in Drumheller, Canmore and Okotoks is a testament to Engeline's efforts and to the support which the Centre has provided.

We are extremely grateful for the wonderful people at the Centre and for Engeline. They have shared their resources and gifts so freely and generously. Where would we be without them?

- Forbes Newman, Calgary

Note: Engeline Piet will lead two workshops in March and a Meditation Retreat Day in May. Meditators may also attend monthly meditation "drop-ins" at FCJ Christian Life Centre, 219-19th Avenue, Calgary. *See Calendar of Events for details.*

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Scenes from the North Bay School Weekend



Madelaine Mageau of Deep River shares the school weekend experience in her article "Ready to Fly on our Own?" see page C10.

From the School Canadian Coordinator **Sharing the Gift**

This new column involving continuing education for meditators will be a regular feature.

A few years ago, the American Quaker, Parker Palmer, wrote a book entitled *To Know As We are Known*. It outlines his philosophy of education: that our perspective on the world arises out of our understanding of who we are. So, for example, if we accept the culture's view that we are "consumers", we will understand the world around us through that lens. Then we may live as people who believe there is a scarcity, that we must compete and struggle to get what we need. If, however, we understand ourselves as "a manifestation of infinite Love," to quote Sister Eileen O'Hea, then we will perceive the world around us through that particular lens. We will live as people who "know". We will experience the abundance and sheer giftedness of life. We will see reality through the lens of love.

When John Main emphasized the importance of meditating - not talking or reading about it, but experiencing it - I believe it was so that you and I could "know as we are known". That is, he wanted us to experience ourselves as a "manifestation of infinite Love in finite form." Father John wanted us to see the world around us through the lens of love because he

knew from his own experience that Love is the reality that permeates the universe. He wanted us to know that our true joy is found in reflecting that Love.

When meditators come to a School weekend, they spend time reviewing the essentials of John Main's teaching, where Christian meditation is located in the larger tradition of prayer in the Church, and the psychological stages encountered in meditation. They practise giving introductory talks to a variety of groups. And they also practise answering common questions about meditation. But at the heart of every School weekend are our meditation times: those times of shared silence when we re-member - that is, re-connect with - who we and all others are. It is from this knowing who we are, that we learn how to "be" and what to "do". When you and I live our daily life in the light of knowing that we are God's beloved, John Main says our life is a testimony to the power of Christ's love. In that sense all meditators are teachers illustrating their knowledge in simplicity and faith.

– Rev. Glenda Meakin

From the National Coordinator On The Path

If you lived in the Ottawa area, you would probably make sure you went for a walk in a park at the beginning of October to be surrounded by the spectacularly colourful maples. The best known is the Gatineau Park. Officials there call it “Fall Rhapsody” and extend a special invitation to visit this beauty on foot or by car. Whether walking or driving, you would be struck by the variety and the intensity of the colours that seem to dance with each other in a gentle and yet powerful choreography: red, burgundy, fuchsia, or orange maple leaves, yellow poplar and birch leaves on the amazing background provided by the firs, the spruce, the white pines, and the cedars. This is the kind of natural beauty that easily opens the door to the divine.

Then, the leaves turn colour and yellows and browns dominate, not at all the mix that would have attracted you a few weeks before. This passage is often accompanied by a bit of sadness or nostalgia for the summer that has passed. It was at that time in the season that I went for a half-day hike around Lac Philippe. There were many more leaves on the ground than on the trees, and I could tell that given a few more weeks it would be mainly the ash that would keep a

few last leaves. This is “Fall, Part II”, the post-spectacular season, a very “ordinary” time of the year.

As I could hear myself walking on dried leaves that made a distinct squishy, soft sound, I was also paying attention to those leaves that had remained on the ash trees. After a while, I noticed that there were different shades of brown, some that were actually more a copper colour, some more like maple syrup or clover honey, some had a touch of ochre in them. It was an overcast day and I was looking at ash leaves dead on their trees when a gentle breeze started to make them move, ever so gently. It was very subtle, and as I paid more attention it became like a powerful slow ballet. There was no red or orange or burgundy, no strong wind or bright sunshine; and yet life was present in all its intensity. It was a time of contact with the magnitude of the Divine, the same profound and life-giving presence that we encounter in the bare mystery of our soul when we sit quietly for meditation on an ordinary day with brown and yellow activities. We know from experience that the Spirit of life is present there, in the very nakedness of the soul. Oh, how much life can flow in a few dead leaves waltzing silently in the wind!

– Michel Legault

Practicalities of Practice

Q. Does God speak to us in meditation? Do we hear God’s voice?

A. Thomas Merton once said that God’s language is silence. So God does not speak to us with a booming voice from heaven but, like Elijah, we will hear God speak to us in the silence.

On the path of meditation we will certainly come to know how God has “spoken” to us. We will see the decisions made, the pitfalls avoided, the right path followed, and we will know that God has spoken to us. But we will not hear the voice of God in our times of meditation in the usual

sense of that term. In our meditation periods, God speaks directly to our hearts. God’s language indeed is silence.

Of course, when it comes to hearing God speak to us on the spiritual journey, there may be times when we will not be absolutely certain we have heard God’s voice or what is the right thing to do in certain instances. For this reason we need faith, deep listening, and sometimes the wise counsel of others.

– reprinted with permission from *Frequently Asked Questions about Christian Meditation: The Path of Contemplative Prayer* [page 52] by Paul T. Harris

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Échos du silence, a newsletter for French-speaking meditators, is available. Send inquiries to Fr. Michel Boyer, editor, 526-7400 boulevard Saint-Laurent, Montreal, QC H2R 2Y1.

A PRAYER

O Mystery,
beyond my words or thought,
but knowable
through love,
I come to You,
from whom my being came.
In silence I come,
heart open to your presence
deep within.
With my whole heart I love you.
With my whole mind and will
I long to think thoughts after you,
that when I speak,
my words which come from you,
go forth with healing power.
And all I do,
may it arise from inspiration that you give.
Surely, then,
I'll know the Psalmist's words*
ring true for me:
"The person in whose heart
the Lord's word dwells continually,
is like a tree
planted by water streams,
who fruit in season yields.
Leaves wither not
and what he does
it prospers every day."

Ron Dicks, Ontario Regional Coordinator

* See Psalm 1

NEWS FROM FAR AND NEAR

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

ISLAND RETREAT LED BY REV. GLENDA MEAKIN

Twenty people attended a retreat hosted by the Christian Meditation Community of Newfoundland on June 24-25, 2005, at the Lantern on Barnes Road, St. John's.

We were blessed with a leader who helped us take charge of our own spiritual program.

The theme of the retreat was *The Quality of Mercy, Meditation and Compassion*. The image of a snowplow clearing away the layers of constant sound and the "monkey chatter" of our minds set the scene on Friday night. Rev. Glenda Meakin, to whom we are very grateful, inspiringly and creatively led the retreat. She and her husband joined our group on the following Monday evening for meditation. Afterwards they went with me to the annual capelan spawning frenzy at Middle Cove, which is a very spiritual experience in itself!

God's peace, Glenda.

– Gordon Lake, St. John's



ACROSS THE OCEAN

PAUL HARRIS VISITS MEDITATION GROUPS IN UK

Paul Harris, former director of the Christian Meditation Centre in England in 1988-89, made his seventh return trip to the UK in September/October to meet with meditation friends, give two weeks of conferences and visit various meditation groups.

His first visit was organized by Christian meditation coordinator John Cotling in Manchester and brought together meditators from various groups in the area. Paul spoke on "Frequently Asked Questions About Christian Meditation".

He then went to Dundee and Tayport in Scotland and a special visit with ailing Scottish coordinator Peter Broadhurst. The highlight came when Peter and Dundee group leader, Margaret McBennett, drove Paul on an all-day tour of Lindisfarne or "Holy Island", the cradle of Christianity in England.

Talks followed in Cumbria, England, in the towns of Ambleside and Penrith, where meditators came together from Windermere and other locations for evening and daytime sessions. In addition Paul, a hiker, managed to get in some hiking in this beautiful Lake District of Cumbria, home to a large number of Christian meditation groups. As well, he visited with David and Sheila Wood, former coordinators in the Lake District, who are responsible for much of the growth of groups in the area.



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

ISLAND TAPESTRIES

In mid-September, three introductory sessions to Christian meditation were held at Mount St. Mary's. The talks centered on the early beginnings of Christian meditation and John Main's teaching on living in reality vs. illusion. Grania Scott also shared how she came to join a meditation group and what it has meant to her. The *Coming Home* video was well received, as always. Four of the newcomers who attended are now participants at one of our weekly meditation meetings. The numbers are slowly growing and we are now 28 meditators who try to come together on a regular basis.

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Program notes: Christian meditation is offered at Mount St. Mary's, Charlottetown, every Tuesday morning (9:05-9:45) and evening (7:15-8:00) using John Main/Laurence Freeman tapes followed by comments and questions. Six-week introductory evenings – one-hour sessions, begin January 16, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. and continue to February 20. See Calendar of Events in this issue for details on a Christian Meditation: Yoga Retreat – April 7-9, Christian Meditation for AA Members and other meditators – May 19-20, and Christian Meditation: Reflection Day – May 27.

– **Kathleen Bolger CSM, Atlantic Area Coordinator**

RETREAT DAY

Island meditators were once again invited, on September 17, 2005, to an annual Retreat Day at Mount St. Mary's. Regional Coordinator, Sr. Kathleen Bolger, and Norma Hannouch arranged the program, around the theme *Lose Yourself in Jesus*. Two periods of meditation, Gospel reflections on Jesus being lost in the temple, small group discussions and silent times made the day pass all too quickly. It was a community-building time and gave a boost to the new weekly meditation groups that had started their fall meetings.

– **Grania Scott**

EVENING OF SHARING

A prayer and social evening, with the theme *The Joy we Shared as we Tarried There*, was held at Mount St. Mary's on October 8, 2005. Gathering in the Meditation Room, we listened to John Main's tape on "Distractions" before meditation. The PEI MAP (Meditation Action Planners) Committee decided to have fun with the program. Members were asked to bring a "show & tell" item that gives them joy or laughter. Many responded and enthusiastically shared their stories and various items. One member in her 90s recited a humorous poem she had presented in a school concert when she was 6 years old. A poster (song and skit) displayed at the end of the program provided a fitting conclusion. It stated, "Enjoy life... this is not a dress rehearsal!"

Lively conversation over lunch prepared by the committee concluded the evening – most enjoyable and a great community builder.

– **Gertie Purdy**

NOVA SCOTIA

CALLED TO PEACE-MAKING

The Task of Making Peace: Transforming the World from Within was the theme for the annual ecumenical Meditation Retreat, sponsored by the Halifax-Dartmouth Christian Meditation Community, October 14-15, 2005. Rev. Frances

Drolet-Smith, a priest serving with the Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, accepted the invitation to be our retreat leader for the second year in a row. Forty participants had the opportunity to learn more about this ancient prayer practice, and to explore peace-making together.

Frances began with an introduction into the way of meditation and based her four talks, spaced around meditation time, on the prayer written for the Week of Prayer for World Peace, 1978:

Lord, we pray for the power to be gentle;
the strength to be forgiving;
the patience to be understanding;
and the endurance to accept the consequences
of holding to what we believe to be right.

May we put our trust
in the power of good to overcome evil
and the power of love to overcome hatred.
We pray for the vision to see
and the faith to believe in a world
emancipated from violence,
a new world where fear shall no longer
lead humanity to commit injustice,
nor selfishness make us bring suffering to others.

Help us to devote our whole life
and thought and energy
to the task of making peace,
praying always for the inspiration and the power
to fulfill the destiny for which we
and all humanity were created.

In her first session, Frances emphasized that in a world that very often seems to have gone astray, "hope is a choice for Christians," and that such hope brings an inner peace that is about God's shalom - the peace that passes all understanding. This peace has its roots deep within each of us - we are called by God to enter His peace and, as Christians, to go about the task of being peacemakers in the world.

The second session called us to be "pilgrims: called to another way of being in the world" – the way of the Lord. Frances stressed that it is only through transformed hearts that the world will be enabled to heal. Our lives of justice can become points of light to the world around us. This approach requires open hands and hearts, "turning the other cheek," but it is the way of the Lord – a life of love, rather than vengeance; of peace rather than violence. Meditation is the path of openness so that God might fill our hearts through an intimacy encouraged by silence.

The task of making peace is based on a letting go of our labels, removing desire for revenge, in order to build relationships modeled after Christ's pattern of love and inclusivity. The

News from Far and Near *continued from previous page*

task of making peace begins with forgiveness. When we forgive, hope and healing have the last word.

The fourth session focused on “deepening our inner life,” as a basis for being peacemakers. Frances encouraged us to continue on the path of the twice-daily practice of personal meditation, and also to participate in weekly meditation groups. The practice of “dying to self, while being present to God” encourages inward peace that reflects outwardly in our lives with others through increased tolerance, compassion, and forgiveness.

The weekend was a journey with the Holy Spirit: a journey of silence and community. Participants greatly appreciated the gift of Frances’ preparedness and gentle leadership. We were not only encouraged in the way of meditation, but also in another way of being, as “His gardeners in the world, attending to His ministry of renewal and restoration.” As we left, there was a great sense of hope, peace, joy and love – a knowing that Peace begins with the individual, and that we are called to shine as “lights”, sharing His love with the world.

– Shirley Murtha, Dartmouth

NEW BRUNSWICK

Mark your calendar now! A special retreat at Villa Madonna Retreat House, Saint John, New Brunswick, led by Fr. Laurence Freeman, October 20-22, 2006.



New Brunswick meditators gathered in July 2005 at Villa Madonna Centre, St. John New Brunswick to participate in a weekend retreat led by Paul Harris.

QUEBEC

MONTREAL WEEKEND RETREAT WITH FR. LAURENCE

The weekend of October 21-23, 2005 found 60 people attending a silent retreat led by Fr. Laurence at L’Ermitage Ste. Croix.

Fr. Laurence’s talks started with Plato’s cave - how the cave dwellers took the shadows on the wall for reality, and their difficult ascent out of the cave. He likened that to our spiritual journey. He also talked about the “Cloud of Unknowing”, St. Theresa’s interior castle, and Fr. John Main’s teachings as each related to attention, humility, self-knowledge and contemplation.

We all came away, filled-up.

– Magda Jass, Montreal.

ONTARIO

FR. LAURENCE’S MESSAGE

On October 20, 2005, Fr. Laurence Freeman led a Twilight Retreat for close to 100 participants at St. Michael’s College Chapel, in Toronto. The theme of the event, organized by the Christian Meditation Community of Toronto, was *Keeping on Beginning: Progress on the Spiritual Path*.

Fr. Laurence began the evening by commenting that whether we are experienced, beginners or intermediate meditators, he hoped we would all find some nourishment at his session. He mentioned the gospel story of Jacob’s well, where Jesus was tired and needed refreshment and rest. We, too, need to pause and take refreshment at the “well” of daily meditation and weekly meditation groups.

Our journey is one that requires constant refreshment. The moment when we have really begun the journey is when we know that we are always beginning.

Using Plato’s allegory of the cave, Fr. Laurence explained that meditation is a process of awakening to seeing reality clearly. The beginnings of the journey towards truth are when we first suspect that we are seeing shadows and not reality. Once we are out of the cave, the path is narrow. Faith is not just a matter of what you believe, but also what you are committed to. We need fidelity to the path, commitment to repetition and to the path itself.

Plato saw the possibility of the ascent of the human mind towards the truth. For the Christian, the ascent sees a corresponding involvement “from above”. Meditation is a learning process whereby we learn to see by the light of Christ. In fact, says Fr. Laurence, Christ returns to the cave continuously to bring us the light and the truth.

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On this journey, we are accompanied by Christ. We let go of our false goals and inappropriate desires. This reminds us of Christ's teaching that "no one can follow me unless he leave behind all of his possessions". Ultimately, we realize that Jesus *is* the way, He *is* the light. Christ is in us and we are in Christ. Christ is guide, companion and friend on the journey. This idea of journey changes our notion of prayer. We do not pray to manipulate God, we pray to become like God, to become more loving. Once on the path, it begins to change. No single step seems very large. It is an ongoing process.

– Joseph Clarkson, Toronto

"FULLY ALIVE II"

Following the success of the first yoga/meditation retreat, the organizing team decided to offer "Fully Alive II" a year later. Last October an enthusiastic group of 25 participants met with Glenda Meakin, Casey Rock, Lucie Legault and Kevin Flynn in Tweed, Ontario to develop the links between the two practices and explore how each can enrich the other in our lives.

Participants once again enjoyed meeting each other over the delicious, vegetarian cuisine of the Bridgewater Retreat Centre. In that beautiful country setting we were able to meditate and take time to stretch our bodies, minds and spirits. Many expressed the wish to meet together next year, and the team hopes to continue offering this opportunity for growth and renewal.

– Lucie Legault



BRITISH COLUMBIA

FR. CHARLES BRANDT'S TALK ON "WONDER"

Star of the Sea Parish, South Surrey, British Columbia, was the venue for a *Day of Reflection* on October 1, 2005. Fr. Charles Brandt, who presented talks on "Wonder", is a hermit monk living in Black Creek, Vancouver Island. He is also an environmentalist, a professional book and paper conservator, and has given courses in Curatorial Care of Paper at the University of Victoria.

Fr. Brandt said, "We all have a specific work, a great work, which involves us all: to make a transition from a society that is having a disruptive influence on the earth, to one that will have a benign presence... We make this transition (as we undergo transformation) by experiencing creation with a sense of wonder and delight, rather than a commodity for our own personal benefit. Meditation nourishes our sense of wonder, and so helps us to have a benign presence to the earth."

At the end of the day, we all left nurtured and encouraged to continue on our journey in Christian meditation.

– Louise Menard, White Rock



Calendar of Events

Note: For regular updates please refer to the Canadian website at www.meditatio.ca/news/updates.

December 2005

30 Dec., Montreal, QC. *Mass – Agapé Celebration of the Life of our teacher, Dom John Main.* Venue: Loyola Chapel, Concordia University, 7141 Sherbrooke St. W. Time: 7:30 p.m. Contact: Polly Schofield 514-481-8746 or <mark.schofield@simpatico.ca>.

January 2006

5 Jan., Calgary, AB. *Meditation Booster - Monthly Drop-in* led by Engeline Piet. Venue: FCJ Christian Life Centre. Time: 12 noon to 12:45 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. Contact: FCJ Christian Life Centre 403-228-4215 or <fcjcentre@fcjsisters.ca>.

14 Jan., Waterloo, ON. *Benedictine Ways* led by Rev. Glenda Meakin. Venue: Renison College, University of Waterloo. Time: 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Registration: Marilyn Malton 519-884-4404 X628 or <ren-rim@renison.uwaterloo.ca>.

26 Jan. Toronto, ON. *Leaving Self Behind* (Introduction to Christian Meditation, Pt. 5) led by Joseph Clarkson. Time: 7 p.m. Venue: Room #4, Knox College, 59 St. George Street, U of T (St. George Campus). Contact: Clem Sauvé 416-921-0367 or <clems@interlog.com> or Joy Gordon 416-485-9718 or <joyg@sympatico.ca>

February 2006

2 Feb., Calgary, ON. *Meditation Booster - Monthly Drop-in* led by Engeline Piet. Time: 12 noon to 12:45 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. Venue and contacts - see Jan. 5, above.

11 Feb., Waterloo, ON. *Benedictine Ways* led by Rev. Glenda Meakin. Time: 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Venue and contacts - see Jan. 14, above.

18 Feb., Winnipeg, MB. *Retreat day* led by Rev. Glenda Meakin. Time: 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Venue: St Peter's Anglican Church, 755 Elm St. Contact: Phil Barnett 488-8093 or <pbarnett.stpetes@mts.net>.

23 Feb., Toronto, ON. *Meditation as a Way of Life* (Introduction to Christian Meditation, Pt.6) led by Marilyn Metcalfe. Time: 7 p.m. Venue and contacts - see Jan. 26, above.

24-26 Feb., Orleans, ON. Christian Meditation Community of Ottawa Annual Silent Retreat: *Meditation, Personal Transformation and Change in the Church* led by Deacon Derek Smith. Venue: Providence House, Orleans. Contact: Ron Dicks 613-739-1046 or <rdicks@rogers.com>.

March 2006

2 Mar., Calgary, AB. *Meditation Booster - Monthly Drop-in* led by Engeline Piet. Time: 12 noon to 12:45 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. Venue and contacts - see Jan. 5, above.

17-19 Mar., Winnipeg, MB. *Fully Alive*—a Christian meditation and yoga retreat led by Casey Rock and Lucie Legault. Time: Begins Friday night and ends after lunch Sunday. Venue: St Benedict's Retreat and Conference Centre. Contact: Phil Barnett 488-8093 or <pbarnett.stpetes@mts.net>.

21 Mar., Calgary, AB. *Introduction to Meditation: Part 1* led by Engeline Piet. Venue: FCJ Christian Life Centre. Time: 7 to 9 p.m. Contact: FCJ Christian Life Centre 403-228-4215 or <fcjcentre@fcjsisters.ca>.

28 Mar., Calgary, AB. *Introduction to Meditation: Part 2* led by Engeline Piet. Time: 7 to 9 p.m. Venue and contacts - see Mar. 21, above.

30 Mar., Toronto, ON. *Stages of the Journey* led by Paul Harris of the John Main Centre, Ottawa. Time: 7 p.m. Venue and contacts – see Jan. 26, above.

31 Mar.-2 Apr., Kingston, ON. *The School - Sharing the Gift* led by the School resource team. Venue: Providence Spirituality Centre. Contact: Rev. Glenda Meakin 519-273-4187 or <meakin@cvg.net>.

April 2006

6 Apr., Calgary, AB. *Meditation Booster - Monthly Drop-in* led by Engeline Piet. Time: 12 noon to 12:45 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. Venue and contacts – see Jan. 5, above.

7-9 Apr., South Rustico, PE. *Prayer of the Heart, Body and Soul*, a Christian meditation and yoga retreat led by Barbara Dick and Lucie Legault. Time: Begins Friday night and ends after lunch Sunday. Venue: Belcourt Centre. Contact: Teri Hall 902-687-3367 or <thall@pei.sympatico.ca>.

27 Apr., Toronto, ON. *Community and New Life* led by Rev. Glenda Meakin. Time: 7 p.m. Venue and contacts – see Jan. 26, above.

May 2006

4 May., Calgary, AB. *Meditation Booster - Monthly Drop-in* led by Engeline Piet. Time: 12 noon to 12:45 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. Venue and contacts – see Jan. 5, above.

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Want to list an event? You will find a user-friendly form to submit additions at www.meditatio.ca/Forms/EventForm.html.

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May 2006 *(continued)*

6 May, Calgary, AB. Meditation Retreat Day led by Engeline Piet. Venue: FCJ Christian Life Centre. Time: 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact: FCJ Christian Life Centre 403-228-4215 or <fcjcentre@fcjsisters.ca>.

19-20 May, Charlottetown, PE. *Stepping into the Sunlight – the twelve steps and meditation* led by George Zanette. Venue: Mount St. Mary's. Contact: Kathleen Bolger CSM, 902-892-6585 or <kblogger@peimarthas.ca>.

25 May, Toronto, ON. *Meditation and Celtic Spirituality: Part 2* led by Lucy Magnus-Burke. Time: 7 p.m. Venue and contacts – see Jan. 26, above.

27 May, Charlottetown, PE. Christian Meditation-Reflection Day including Lectio Divina. Time: 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Venue and contacts – see May 19, above.

June 2006

1 June, Calgary, AB. *Meditation Booster – Monthly Drop-in* led by Engeline Piet. Time: 12 noon to 12:45 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. Venue and contacts – see Jan. 5, above.

9-11 June, Toronto, ON. Christian Meditation Community of Toronto *Annual Weekend Retreat* led by Derek Smith, Roman Catholic deacon, and professor of Anthropology at Carleton University, Ottawa. Venue: the new St. John's Convent, 233 Cummer Avenue (Yonge & Finch). Full details in CMCT's January mailing and next issue of NewsNotes.

22 June, Toronto, ON. Theme: TBA. Speaker: Brian Deery. Time: 7 p.m. Venue and contacts - see Jan. 26, above.

October 2006

20-22 Oct., St. John, NB. Special Retreat led by Fr. Laurence Freeman at Villa Madonna Retreat House. Mark calendars now, details in next issue of NewsNotes.

“Ready to Fly on our Own?”

It was a very enthusiastic group of people who left the St. Joseph Motherhouse in North Bay on October 16. Twelve of us had participated in a School weekend led by three devoted animators. As one person summarized it, “We don't need vehicles now to get home...we can just fly on our own!” Warmth and empathy had filled the weekend, from Michel Legault's Friday night welcome to the final ritual of affirmation on Sunday. Now we were leaving with a renewed sense of connection and a desire to “share the gift” of meditation.

Saturday dawned, our “heavy duty” day, when each participant would have to deliver two prepared talks on meditation. Undoubtedly, a few butterflies shared company with people's breakfasts! But these were probably dispersed when Rev. Glenda Meakin gave the first talk. She drew, from the story of the Samaritan woman at the well, a picture so vivid of Jesus offering living water and accepting her exactly as she was, that the parallel with meditation became eminently clear. This certainly wasn't “old stuff” we already knew, but a chance to plunge again into the deep mystery and gift of Living Water offered in meditation. Fortified and probably humbled, we were then able to go off in little groups to listen to each other's prepared talks. And, hopefully, to remember Glenda's wise humour, “This is a chance to be imperfect.”

Acceptance of each other, simplicity and heartfelt listening were evident in the small group talks and the full gatherings. The small group exercise, of giving a talk to introduce meditation to a hypothetical audience, was certainly a chance

to practise simplicity and openness, both in receiving and in giving suggestions. A good dose of camaraderie was mixed in, which surely made it easier to “be imperfect”!

We went away affirmed and more aware that “sharing the gift” requires careful preparation and much meditation. All the teachings and sessions by our three animators were planned to help deepen our knowledge of meditation and to further our own healing and growth. Nor was the body neglected (“stretch and sigh” with Carol Peterson), or the spirit (think “social” on Saturday)!

“I just feel the spiritual energy grow in this room as we go on!” is a comment someone aptly made as we tried to express our joy about the weekend. Sunday morning's gathering ended in a crescendo of joyful energy with the closing liturgy. In a lovely room, the circle completed by the lake's autumn beauty before us, we celebrated the Eucharist with full hearts. At the close, each one was called up for a “Sending Forth”, which again exemplified the sensitivity of the leaders: a phrase was given to each person describing what they, in particular, bring to the teaching of meditation. And we were given a manual, a carefully crafted tool for the aspiring teacher and faithful meditator. So, with grateful hearts to the One who brought us to this stage of the journey, with gratitude to Marilyn Parker and Carol Peterson, organizers of the event, and to Michel, Glenda and Carol, our splendid resource team, we parted after lunch. “Ready to fly on our own?”... Surely not, but with renewed hope and strength for the journey!

– Madelaine Mageau, Deep River, Ontario

COMMUNITY NOTES

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Regional Coordinators play a key role as community builders, convening meditators together, organizing events, and linking groups. Over the last few months, three Coordinators finished their term and others have come on board. Thanks to Terence Marner (Alberta/Saskatchewan), Rev. Glenda Meakin (Ontario) and Clare Duckworth (Quebec) for their dedicated service to their regional communities. Welcome to Rosemary Bishop (Alberta/Saskatchewan), Ron Dicks (Ontario) and Joan McKinnon (Quebec) for accepting the invitation to become Coordinators for their Region. We welcome them warmly and with gratitude.

Sister Hilda Frost OSB, has resigned as Coordinator of the Canadian WCCM Oblates, and Fr. Laurence has appointed Don Myrick as the new Coordinator. "Don is a long-time meditator and Oblate, and is an excellent choice," Sr. Hilda noted, in offering her thanks and congratulations to him.

Message from Don Myrick on his new responsibility

"On behalf of the Canadian Oblate community, I would like to extend sincere and heartfelt thanks to Sr. Hilda for her work over the last several years. Even though most of it was behind the scenes, we were, nonetheless, aware of her steadiness, patience and magnanimous spirit. Her wisdom was evident in her monthly reflections, which were always practical, and born out of a lived experience rather than religious theory. 'All the best Sister, and please keep in touch.'

"I look forward to the challenge ahead. We are, of course, a small community spread across a vast area. I hope I may continue to foster a sense of community and be a conduit through which we can support and encourage each other on the journey. Peace to all."

– Don Myrick's mailing address is 27 Costello Ave.
Nepean ON, K2H 7C3, telephone: 613-828-4938, e-mail: <tdmyrick@magma.ca>.

WEB NEWS CANADIAN WEBSITE

Be sure to visit <www.meditatio.ca> where you will find short introductory talks on Christian meditation, community news including the latest copy of NewsNotes, the Area Coordinators, and a list of the Christian meditation groups in Canada. This website is designed to provide you with information about Christian meditation in Canada. Please send all comments, questions and suggestions to Chris Tanner <christopher.tanner@sympatico.ca>.

FR LAURENCE'S "MEDITATIO" TALKS ON-LINE

Visit the World Community for Christian Meditation website <www.wccm.org> where you may listen to QuickTime versions of a special on-going series of talks given by Fr. Laurence Freeman OSB on the tradition and practice of Christian meditation. The Homepage provides a link "Listen... Podcasts." When you follow this link, you will be able to choose Series A to D.

LET'S KEEP CONNECTED

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Evening Meditation at 2005 Conference

Dances of Universal Peace



The Dances of Universal Peace are simple, meditative, joyous, multi-cultural circle dances that use sacred phrases, chants, music, and movements from the many traditions of the earth to touch the spiritual essence within ourselves and others. Based on the work begun in the late 1960s by Samuel L. Lewis, they promote peace and integration within individuals and groups worldwide. There are neither performers nor audience – new arrivals and old hands form the circle together. And, no prior experience is necessary!

Making Bridges was the theme of the 2005 Canadian Christian Meditation Conference held in June 2005. It seemed very natural that, with a title like that, the organizers would arrange to have Dances of Universal Peace be a big part of their Saturday evening agenda.

The Ottawa conference, held in June, had representatives from many spiritual traditions there to promote understanding of many of the sacred paths in the world.

When the opportunity arose, three of us from the Pembroke Dance circle said YES. What a perfect fit these wonderful dances were to weave the magic of direct experience of sacred traditions into the weekend conference.

It was a special moment when we asked a lovely man from a Hindu background to speak to the meaning of Ram for the Sri Ram Pranam Dance. He truly lit up as he explained how much the phrase Sri Ram meant to those who follow the Hindu path. With his help, the attunement to this dance had a clarity that only someone steeped in the tradition can bring. I thought, in that moment, that the Dances are so very relevant in helping us all to directly experience the spirituality of people from all over the world.

Opening to and understanding each other in a deep way is the way to peace in these times. By engaging and spreading the beauty of these Dances, we are really doing something important for both ourselves and our troubled world. Sounds pretty close to Sam Lewis' original dream doesn't it?

– Ken Birkett, Pembroke Dance Circle



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