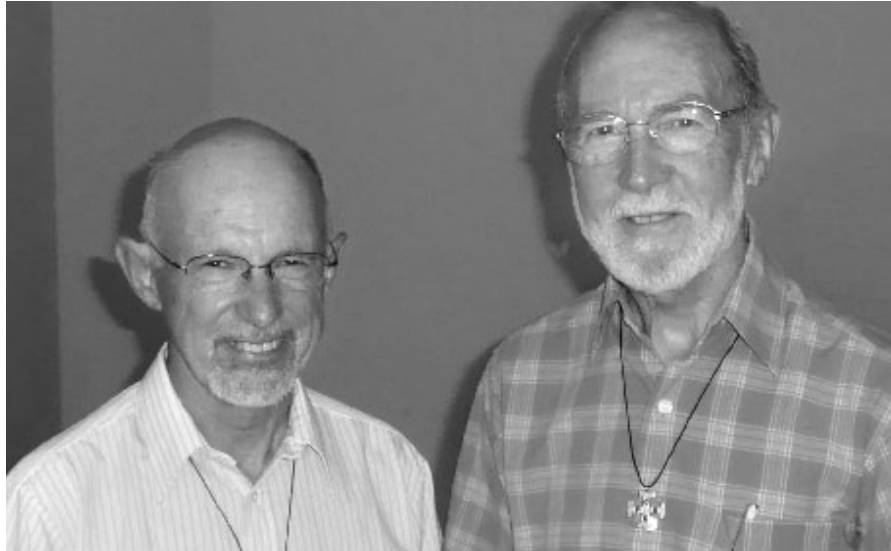


Open House, Open Hearts



Don Myrick and Ron Dicks

I listlessly trekked over to the Bronson Centre on a sweltering Ottawa morning, Saturday, June 7, to join 24 other meditators (of whom half were lay Oblates) for an Oblate Open House.

After a short introduction, we meditated, and my mind started to focus in a new way. It almost felt as if the heat no longer really mattered. Something more significant, more central, was taking place. Then we prayed together the Benedictine midday prayer and listened to a recorded talk of John Main. Don Myrick, Canadian Oblate Coordinator, spoke about what it means to be an Oblate and described the evolution of Benedictine Oblates from within the Christian meditation community. John Main was the catalyst for this fellowship of meditators in the Christian tradition. Thanks to his efforts and vision, the small seed that he planted has grown into a mighty tree with branches all over the world. Today, Benedictine Oblates play a key role in supporting the World Community for Christian Meditation.

For some time I had been wondering about the Oblate way of life. I would always, however, come up with myriad objections to becoming one. Am I disciplined enough? Is it too onerous a commitment? Am I too old? Oblates of our

Community, along with their daily meditation practice, pray the morning and evening Office and do *lectio divina* or spiritual reading. An Oblate promises to serve God and the Community in the spirit of the Rule of St. Benedict, which encompasses “obedience, stability and conversion.” Don gradually helped us to understand that the commitment required need not be overwhelming. Oblates don’t promise to be perfect—they resolve to do their best to live according to the Rule, within the parameters of their own particular life. The Holy Spirit can help with the rest.

A highlight of the Open House was the final oblation ceremony for Ron Dicks. Ron spoke about his own journey to becoming an Oblate, a journey marked by deep sincerity and compassion. He shared with us a hymn that brought all together in a spirit of unity.

This spirit, this sense of shared peace had an impact that I carried with me for the rest of the day. I was inspired to stand back and re-examine where I have been in my life and where I may choose to go from here. I still don’t know whether I will become an Oblate, but I felt it was something that I could do, if the Spirit called and I chose to respond.

Continued on page 11

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John Main Seminar 2008

As the National Coordinator I was very fortunate to attend the 25th John Main Seminar which took place in Mainz Germany Friday August 15 to Sunday August 17. This is the first time that I have been to Germany, so this has added to my enjoyment of the whole experience.

The Seminar was held in the Erbacher Hof, a modern church conference centre, two minutes' walk from the Cathedral, and five minutes from the Rhine. There were 120 people registered, including 32 National Coordinators, who met together for several days after the conference. The theme of the Seminar was "Unity: Local and Global." The main speaker was Cardinal Kaspar, who generously took time out of his vacation to be with us.

The wonderful aspect of the John Main Seminars is that they are rooted in the practice of what we proclaim. On Saturday, for example, there were four meditation periods in the schedule. In addition, those who wished would get up early for yoga and an extra meditation.

We were treated to other sounds from historic roots in an organ recital in the Cathedral. We heard familiar pieces by Bach and Dvorak, which were wonderful. But for me, the truly outstanding pieces were two free improvisations by the organist. The first one was based on *Adeste Fideles*, and the second *Veni Creator Spiritus*. The whole cathedral seemed to shake with sound, recalling the presence of the Holy Spirit at Creation and in the fire and drama of Pentecost.

One of the talks was entitled "That All Shall be One" given by Sister Katharina Klara Schridder, who belongs to a Protestant order, founded in 1950, which follows the Rule of Benedict. She traced the divisions in the church from earliest times, the schism between East and West, and the Reformation. She reminded us that the church is not one. Jesus' prayer and our prayer that we may all be one has not been fulfilled. Does this mean that the Holy Spirit has no influence over the Church? It may be that the Holy Spirit is not in a hurry to have the church united. After all, when you look at a family there are different members with

different characteristics. Paul talks about the body of Christ having many members. Each one is different and each one is necessary and cannot do without the others. The problem occurs when one member thinks it is the whole, rather than being part of the whole. This is a widespread phenomenon, arising from the attitude that "I am right, and all others are wrong." This is where meditation can play a major role. In the silence, we are able to get beyond the language of division and recognize that the Holy Spirit is present in the midst of the differences.

On Saturday evening, we returned to the Cathedral for Eucharist with Cardinal Kaspar presiding. It was a traditional service with ceremony, chant and incense. The liturgy communicated a sense of mystery and continuity with those who had worshipped in this ancient building through the centuries.

In the second of his two talks, Cardinal Kaspar addressed the topic of ecumenism. He acknowledged that we are currently in a difficult situation. Some have talked of it being like a winter, or an ice-age, or a crisis. But the Cardinal was not so pessimistic. He said that the Roman Catholic church is committed to ecumenism. The question is, how to accomplish it. The basis for ecumenism is the prayer of Jesus that "all may be one." He noted that it is a prayer, not a commandment. We cannot produce unity solely by our own efforts. It is a gift from God. It is through prayer that unity will come into existence. Ecumenism has to be understood as a spiritual movement, and not as political unity. The deep rifts that we see in Christianity are the result of a lack of love. The timing is in God's hands.

The whole conference was a witness to the Cardinal's observation that ecumenism is already working on the micro level. Christians from different denominations and from many different countries came together to pray, worship, work together, learn from one another and to celebrate the reality of our unity in Christ.

**Phil Barnett
Winnipeg, MB**

OBLATION by Reta Hamilton

I stand eyes downward cast,
Listening as two preceded me—
Uncertain, nervous—wondering how I will fulfill this promise?
The answer sweeps through my heart
Strong, clear and reassuring,
"With My help—for I will never leave you."
Days will come and go—good, bad or indifferent according to worldly standards.
O Lord, forgive my transgressions and failures.
I humbly ask for strength and grace each day to continue this journey that you have revealed.
Ending if You will it—safe within your compassionate and Sacred Heart.

From the National Coordinator

Horizons

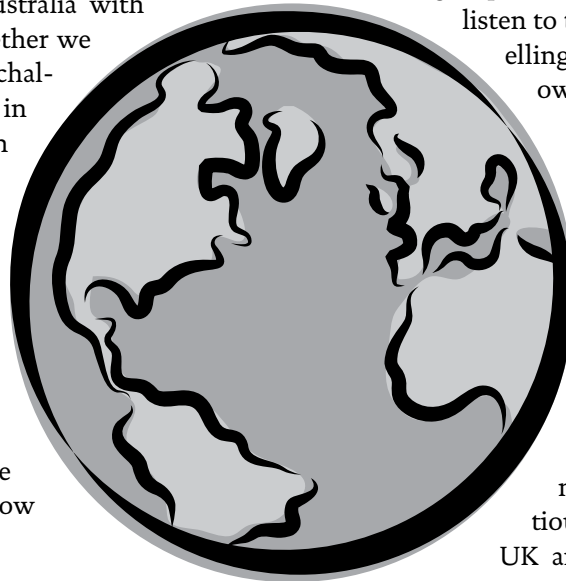
Christian meditation is practiced in many countries. I was privileged to be with representatives from 27 countries at a meeting of National Coordinators, August 18-21 in Mainz, Germany following the John Main Seminar. During the introductions we quickly discovered the wide variation in the spread of Christian meditation. In Uganda there is one group. Norway and the Czech Republic have two groups each, and the count goes up to Australia with 408 groups. Over the four days together we became more aware of some of the challenges each country experiences in teaching and promoting Christian meditation.

In preparation for our work, Fr. Laurence led us in a retreat. I am always surprised by the sense of community that develops in silence. No one has to think about what to say. We can simply “be” together. Fr. Laurence encouraged us to enter into the experience, to leave our baggage behind and come to know ourselves as loved by God.

We had several periods of meditation, a yoga session and a walking meditation. I’ve walked the Labyrinth many times, but this walking meditation was different. We stood in a large circle, close to each other, and were told to turn right and start walking, following the person in front. But how do you start when the person in front is standing still? Somehow we moved and soon were walking very slowly, putting one foot gently in front of the other. It is a remarkable exercise for a group because even though you are focused on your own steps, you are very much aware of the person in front, and of the whole group in a more general way. You also cannot go at your own pace

as you have to cooperate with, and be considerate of, the others in the group.

This has some similarities to our meditation groups that meet week by week. We meditate as individuals in our own way (with our own distractions!), but we are also aware of the other people in the room. When a new person joins the group we need to be considerate and be willing to listen to the introductory materials again, travelling at a beginner’s pace rather than our own.



One of the joys of the Coordinators’ meeting was to see the energy of the newer countries, who called themselves “the start-ups.” They were eager for resources and excited about keeping in contact and supporting each other. Deciding that the next Coordinators’ meeting in three years’ time was too long to wait, they arranged to meet in Prague next year. Their enthusiasm was infectious, and we old-timers (Canada, the UK and Australia) also felt renewed. We were reminded that there are regions of our own countries that are like “the start-ups” – regions distant from more established groups and where it can be difficult to find resources. But in quiet ways the Spirit moves, continuing to bring seekers to an awareness of Christian meditation. Fr. Laurence mentioned that after John Main died many thought that Christian meditation would fade away. But the Holy Spirit had other ideas and Christian meditation continues to develop, in our own lives and around the world.

Phil Barnett
Winnipeg, MB
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The summer edition of NewsNotes was numbered Volume 3 in error.
That issue was Volume 2. This issue is Volume 3.

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NEWS FROM FAR AND NEAR



Montebello Picnic

MONTEBELLO PICNIC

On a perfect summer day in mid-July, the Montreal and Ottawa communities of Christian meditators travelled to the beautiful countryside setting of Sedburgh Boarding School outside of Montebello, Quebec. There we held our annual picnic commemorating the Feast Day of St. Benedict. Our gracious host was Vincent Lavoie, who also celebrated his 90th birthday that very day. There were warm smiles and hearty hugs as friends met and new acquaintances were made. God bless Magda Jass and friends for organizing this wonderful outing.

The group of about 50 meditators got comfortable in lawn chairs, while Magda took the lead for our noon meditation session. We began with a talk by Fr. Laurence from the new Meditatio CD series, *The Ego: On Our Spiritual Journey*. We then meditated to the sound of birds chirping, the wind in the trees and the lake waters lapping on the shore. Food and drink preceded a wonderful time of fun and fellowship, swimming, taking a leisurely walk among the trees, or being content to lounge by the beach or on the dock. Afterwards, some of the group headed for historic Montebello Lodge – the largest log structure in the world – on the banks of the Ottawa River.

What a joy-filled celebration! As John Main and Fr. Laurence have so often stated in their teachings, “Meditation builds community.”

Darrell Tessier
Ottawa, ON

WITH THANKS FROM CURACAO

It has been some time since we attended the John Main Seminar in Orford, Quebec and we have started a group that has been coming together for about four months. We still feel that something special happened at the JMS and that God’s light is now bubbling from within and is spreading. This makes me think that we all have to let His light shine through our actions and words, thoughts and feelings.

I still have the feeling that it was only a few weeks ago that Michel Legault visited us. We are still very grateful that we have received your support and that we have started. We have a core of ten faithful meditators coming to the meetings. We are on the path with faith and enthusiasm. To make new discoveries and go deeper on this divine path I think we have to embrace each other, stay in tune together and support one another.

As it is a challenge for the newcomers as meditators it is also for us as leaders – who are not experts – a challenge to give guidance and share this divine gift. I am doing it with much love and gratitude in my heart. I have put my responsibility and commitment on the pillars of faith to follow my path and I keep in mind what Father Laurence has written, “The Teacher is within.”

Johanna Mercedes Cratz
Curacao, Netherlands Antilles

OTTAWA BENEDICTINE LAY OBLATE COMMUNITY CELEBRATES FEAST OF SAINT BENEDICT

July 11, Feast Day of St. Benedict, brought 50 meditators and parish newcomers to the newly built Roman Catholic church, Holy Spirit Parish in Stittsville. Five new Benedictine Oblates were received and professed Oblates renewed their Promises.

The day was organized by Marian Charbonneau, Benedictine Lay Oblate, experienced spiritual director and teacher. We began with Mass, celebrated by Fr. Steve Amesse. The homily was by newly ordained Deacon Ron McRae, who is also a Benedictine Oblate.

The Canadian Director of Benedictine Lay Oblates, Don Myrick, received the promises of five novices: Trish Connor, Rita Kuiack, Mary Locke, Katherine LeLievre and Martha MacLeod, as well as the Renewal of Promises by all Benedictine Lay Oblates who were present. Don spoke on the role of Oblates in the World Community, as a spiritual connection with our founder and Benedictine monk, John Main, and including key points of Fr. John's teaching.

Keynote speaker Paul Harris directed his talk to newcomers as well as to experienced meditators. Paul spoke on "Christian Meditation: The Path of Contemplative Prayer." He anchored his talk on the scriptural basis of Christian meditation as well as the prayer practice of the 3rd-century Chris-

tian desert monks, and the 14th-century spiritual classic, *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Paul interspersed his comments with quotations from a wide range of writers such as St. Augustine, John Cassian, Meister Eckhart, Mother Teresa and from scripture.

The all-morning sessions, which included a period of meditation, were followed by lunch, hosted by the Benedictine Lay Oblate cell in Stittsville, a dedicated group of ten.

Congratulations and many blessings to our five newly professed Benedictine Lay Oblates who have been in preparation with Marian Charbonneau for close to three years, meeting faithfully every Wednesday for meditation, teaching and discussion on Fr. John's vision on the monastic life of the lay person today.

This marks the eighth year this special feast day has been celebrated by the Stittsville Benedictine group. All thanks and praise to our Loving God who has guided us to this contemplative path of the "silent prayer of the heart" and the Rule of Saint Benedict.

**Deborah Poitras
Ottawa, ON**

To learn more about Benedictine Oblates, visit www.wccm.org and choose the menu option for The Community. This takes you to a list of articles, and you could begin with the second article, written by Laurence Freeman.

SUPPORT CHRISTIAN MEDITATION IN CANADA

Each year at this time we invite your donations to promote and support the teaching and practice of Christian Meditation in Canada. We have a very active and dedicated community which carries out this work in many ways. When I was at the meeting of National Coordinators recently I saw how well organized and active we are in Canada compared to other countries. We have developed an excellent national structure to support local groups and the individual meditator. Some of the components are:

- a National Council with representatives from across the country who keep in touch with each other, providing practical support, encouragement and resources.
- members who organise The School events which enable participants to deepen their meditation practice.
- a National Resource Centre which provides a wide selection of publications to enrich our understanding and practice of meditation.
- the NewsNotes newsletter which keeps us informed about community events across the country.

All of these activities cost money to provide, so we invite you to support this important work by making a donation to the Doreen Romandini Memorial Fund. This fund was established in honour of a person who played a central role in the early years of the formation of the Christian Meditation community in Canada. Please take time to read the insert in this edition of NewsNotes and consider making a gift to ensure the continuing good work of our national network.

Thank you for your participation in and support for your Canadian Christian Meditation Community.

**Phil Barnett
National Coordinator**

Meditators Share Prayer and Silence with Monks at Rougemont Abbey, Quebec

June 20, 2008 was a beautiful, sunny Friday as we drove through the gates of l'Abbaye Cistercienne de Rougemont, in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. This monastery, I was to learn, is the only Cistercian monastery in Canada. Here, eight meditators from Ottawa joined 17 Montreal meditators for a silent retreat organized by Magda Jass and Polly Schofield of the Montreal Christian Meditation Community.

Our retreat was based on a series of unpublished talks that John Main had given to the Grail Community in London in 1976. Polly opened the week-end retreat by paraphrasing Leonard Cohen: in the monastery they keep you so busy with work and prayer that you don't have much time to think about yourself. This thought would resonate with me throughout the weekend.

Retreatants were welcome to pray the Liturgy of the Hours with the monks. I took this opportunity to see what that would be like and participated in all of the Hours. As I dragged myself out of bed each morning at 4:00 a.m. for Vigils, I started to appreciate Leonard Cohen's view of monastic life. One of the monks later told me that after 35 years, getting up for Vigils is still the hardest part of his day and he has never gotten used to it. This little reality-check brought some perspective to the romanticization of monastic life! Nevertheless, it was a wonderful experience to share the Hours with the monks and at least gain some understanding of what the "single-minded seeking of God" might entail.

Polly read from the notes of John Main, interjecting at intervals some of her personal experiences of Father John at the Priory. It was not long before the very essence of this wise and loving man seemed to permeate the room. Although I have always had a sense of "knowing" him from listening to his tapes and reading his books, this weekend in particular he seemed to come to life in the voice of one of his earliest and most devout followers. Polly's personal anecdotes gave us a feel for the man he was – the breadth of his life, his love, his sense of humour and his vision. We not only exper-



perienced the richness of his teachings but we came to know a man who not only taught about love but who lived it, a man who was generous, joyful, elegant, poetic, funny and above all, loving – not in a sentimental way but in a full, expansive and inclusive way.

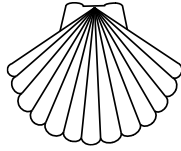
The first talk, on sin, was truly liberating. Sin, John Main tells us, is a rupture or disharmony, a turning away from God, and the antidote is prayer, which restores union with God – not by dwelling on our wrongs (such egoism only prevents us from experiencing spiritual liberty) but by turning back to God in humility. As St. Paul reminds us, grace abounds where sin is found, that is, if we are truly humble in the face of our weakness and turn with open hearts back to God. Meditation teaches us perfect humility, which is the true knowledge of ourselves as we are. "To be humble is to realize that we are infinitely valuable, infinitely important and temples of the Infinite Holiness of God." Sin has already been wiped out by Christ – through his love.

Each talk was followed by a taped talk of John Main and meditation and then it was time for prayer with the monks and another meal. Yet there was still time for a walk on the beautiful grounds of the monastery where lush lawns and shrubbery were splashed with early summer blossoms. Rustic benches were strategically placed around fish ponds dotted with lily pads – some replete with little sun-bathing frogs showing us how to live in the present moment – providing a serene and contemplative setting. As I strolled along the Path of Peace that led through the arboretum and beyond to the apple orchards I could not help but reflect on our own path of peace – the path of meditation that John Main cleared for us to follow, the path to fullness of life.

All too soon we were gathered Sunday afternoon on the front steps of the monastery for the customary photo. Goodbyes were exchanged and we headed back to Ottawa, refreshed and renewed – and driving more slowly, one of my passengers remarked, than we had on the way down just two days before.



**Flora Benoit
Ottawa, ON**



El Camino de Santiago and the Way of the Mantra

Over the last decade, the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela in Spain has been revived by thousands who walk each year on this ancient path dating back to the 11th century and recognized today by the UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. As pilgrims came to this sacred site from all over Europe during the Middle Ages, a number of routes developed through France. Today, many walkers choose to do the section between the Pyrenees and Santiago de Compostela, a trail of 850 km. Others opt for one of the several routes in France that lead to the Pyrenees, which is what Lucie and I did, recognizing that it would be easier to connect with local people along the way. As we walked in southern France for 29 days, covering some 600 km, we were struck many times by the similarities between El Camino and the Way of the Mantra.

To begin with, both have ancient roots, which bring depth to a spiritual practice. In Aumont-Aubrac, as in many other villages along the route, we sat in silence for a few minutes in a church that dates back to the Middle Ages. To be connected to people who for so many centuries have shared the same faith: what a profound experience.

One of the elements that characterizes this walk is its long distance. Day after day, you simply continue where you left off the day before. You don't have to decide what path you'll do today. This is so familiar to us who walk the way of the mantra: in meditation, day after day we continue our practice, we repeat our word faithfully.

Many days we had rain, either a drizzle that lasted several hours or a heavy rain that was concentrated in a shorter period of time: One way or other, we put on our rain gear and kept on walking. Not as exciting, for sure. Yet, quite do-able. Similarly, the way of the mantra is a "rain or shine" kind of spiritual practice. At times, as we have all experienced, meditation seems to be the sunny part of our day, and it is easy, even appealing, to sit quietly. Other days, it is the last thing we want to do and yet, we simply put our spiritual rain gear on and do it!

As we talked with others during meals, there were some who clearly identified themselves as pilgrims, who felt a deep connection with the Church. Others preferred to



call themselves walkers, being on the path as on a spiritual quest, or absorbing the beauty of the countryside, or trying to find themselves, to identify what the next step in their life will be. Whether showing attachment to an official institution or not, we felt a deep sense of fellowship. Similarly, some meditators are directly connected to the Church, others more loosely. Yet both groups find their place.

Along the way, as we entered medieval chapels or 16th century churches, our attention typically went to the stained glass windows, illustrating the different saints who were honoured in that area or portraying different scenes of the life of Jesus. In one of them, the windows had been totally redone over the last few years, and instead of representing specific saints or scenes, they were clusters of blues, reds and yellows. Somehow, they evoked depth, peace and life without explicitly illustrating it. This spiritual work of art reminded us how with the mantra also we go beyond images to capture the divine beyond words and metaphors.

"Just say your mantra" and "Just keep on walking": different contexts, similar message. Strange how one discipline based on stillness and one requiring constant movement end up having so much in common. Perhaps, actually, all spiritual practices end up intersecting when we explore them at a deep enough level and with openness!

**Michel Legault
Cantley, QC**

Calendar of Events

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

October

2 October, Calgary, AB. Meditation Drop-In. Time: 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Venue: FCJ Christian Life Centre, 219-19th Ave. S. W., Calgary, AB. Contact: (403) 229-4215.

9-12 October, South Rustico, PE. Encountering the Word, led by Rev. Glenda Meakin. Time: 7:00 p.m. Thursday to Sunday noon. Venue: Belcourt Centre, South Rustico. Contact: Sr. Kathleen Bolger at 902 892-6585 or kbolger@peimarthas.ca

10-12 October, Montreal, QC. A Christian Meditation Retreat based on the unpublished retreats of John Main, led by Polly Schofield. Venue: L'Ermitage St. Croix. Contacts: Magda Jass at 514 489-0998, magda.jass@gmail.com or Polly Schofield at 514 481-8746 or mark.schofield@sympatico.ca

17-19 October, Kingston, ON. Fully Alive: A meditation and yoga retreat. Venue: Providence Spirituality Centre. Facilitators: Kevin Flynn, Lucie Legault, Casey Rock. Contact: Casey Rock at 416 463-7110 or caseyrock@rogers.com

17-19 October, Rothesay, NB. Meditation, A Path of Silence, led by Michel Legault. Venue: Villa Madonna Retreat House. Contact: Dianne O'Dell at toll-free 1-866-783-3300 or 849-5125.

24 October, Calgary, AB. Let Nothing Disturb You, led by Rev. Glenda Meakin. Time: 7:30 p.m. Venue: Christ Church (Anglican), 3602-8 St. S.W., Calgary AB. Cost: \$15/session or \$45 for all four sessions this weekend. Contact Christ Church at 403 243-4680 or Forbes Newman at 403 243-6506.

25 October, Calgary, AB. Encountering the Word, led by Rev. Glenda Meakin. @ 9:30 a.m. and Meditation and Wonder @ 1:30 p.m. Venue: Christ Church (Anglican), 3602-8 St. S.W., Calgary AB. Cost: \$15/session or \$45 for all four sessions this weekend. Contact Christ Church at 403 243-4680 or Forbes Newman at 403 243-6506.

25 October, Sudbury, ON. *Une voie de silence.* A one-day meditation event with speaker: Michel Legault. Location: Centre Santé, 19 chemin Froot, Sudbury ON, time: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, Saturday, October 25. This retreat will be given in French. For more information contact: Madelaine Mageau at 613 584-9192.

26 October, Calgary, AB. Deepening Our Roots, Widening our Vision, led by Rev. Glenda Meakin. Time: 9:00 a.m. Venue: Christ Church (Anglican), 3602-8 St. S.W., Calgary AB. Cost: \$15/session or \$45 for all four sessions this weekend. Contact: Christ Church at 403 243-4680 or Forbes Newman at 403 243-6506.

28 October, Winnipeg, MB. Twilight Retreat with The Rev. Glenda Meakin titled "Let Nothing Disturb You" on Tuesday October 28, 2008 at St. Peter's Anglican Church, 755 Elm St. Winnipeg MB. 7:00-10:00 p.m. For Info call Karen 204-831-0706.

30 October, Toronto, ON. Jesus and the Space of Authenticity, led by John Callaghan. Time: 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Location: Knox College, University of Toronto, 59 George St. Contact: Joy Gordon at 416 485-9718.

November

1 November, Waterloo, ON. Deepening our Roots. Widening our Vision, led by Rev. Glenda Meakin. Fall Retreat: 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Venue: Renison University College, 240 Westmount Road North in Waterloo, Ontario. Individual Fee \$35/retreat day or \$125 retreat series. To register: contact Marilyn Malton, ren-rim@renison.uwaterloo.ca or 519 884-4404 x 28628.

6 November, Calgary, AB. Meditation Drop-In. Time: 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Venue: FCJ Christian Life Centre, 219-19th Ave. S. W., Calgary, AB. Contact: (403) 229-4215.

12 November, Calgary, AB. Introduction to Meditation – Part 1. Time: 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Venue: FCJ Christian Life Centre, 219-19th Ave. S. W., Calgary, AB. Contact: (403) 229-4215.

19 November, Calgary, AB. Introduction to Meditation – Part 2. Time: 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Venue: FCJ Christian Life Centre, 219-19th Ave. S. W., Calgary, AB. Contact: (403) 229-4215.

27 November, Toronto, ON. Presence in Contemplative Prayer, led by Bro. Barry Lynch, Christian Brothers. Time: 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Location: Knox College, University of Toronto, 59 George St. Individual events are described above. For more information contact: Joy Gordon at 416 485-9718.

29 November, Ottawa, ON. Advent: Living Between Memory and Hope Advent Retreat with Kevin Flynn, Director of Anglican Studies, St. Paul University, Place: Main Chapel of St. Paul University, 249 Main St. (2nd floor Laframboise Pavilion, just south of mail building). Time: 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Free parking in the north parking lot, entry at Hazel St. intersection. Cost: Donation. Contact: Anne Louise Mahoney at 613 730-2060 or annelou1@sympatico.ca. Please bring a bag lunch and a drink.

29 November, Waterloo, ON. Deepening our Roots. Widening our Vision, led by Rev. Glenda Meakin. Advent Retreat: 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Venue: Renison University College, 240 Westmount Road North in Waterloo, Ontario. Individual Fee \$35/retreat day or \$125 retreat series. To register: contact Marilyn Malton, ren-rim@renison.uwaterloo.ca or 519 884-4404 x 28628

December

4 December, Calgary, AB. Meditation Drop-In. Time: 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Venue: FCJ Christian Life Centre, 219-19th Ave. S. W., Calgary, AB. Contact: (403) 229-4215.

11 December, Toronto ON. In the Calm of His Care, led by Kathleen Russell, CNCT Member. Time: 7 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. Venue and contact: see 27 November. Please note early December meeting date.

13 December, Calgary, AB. Meditation Retreat Day. Time: 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Venue: FCJ Christian Life Centre, 219-19th Ave. S. W., Calgary, AB. Contact: (403) 228-4215.

Regularly Scheduled Events

Wednesdays 6:30-8:30, October 1 to November 5, 2008, Ottawa, ON. Coming Home: An Introduction to Christian Meditation. Venue: St. Margaret Mary Church, Faribairn St. (corner Sunnyside Ave., 2 blocks east of Bank St.), Ottawa. Cost is \$20 for the series. To register, please call Rita at 613-739-4020 or contact quidnovi@magna.ca.

First Thursday of each month, Calgary, AB. Meditation Booster – Monthly Drop-in led by Engeline Piet at FCJ Christian Life Centre 219-19th Avenue. Time: 12 noon to 12:45 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. Contact: FCJ Christian Life Centre at 403-228-4215.

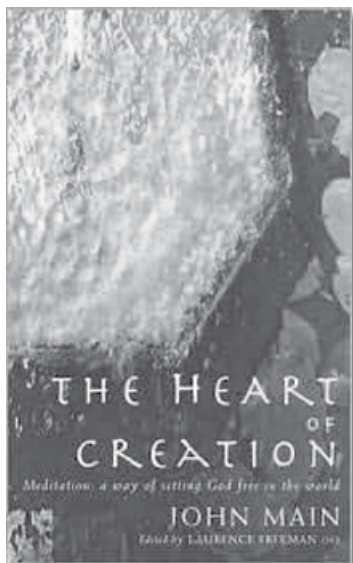
Last Thursday of each month, Toronto Ontario. CMCT monthly meeting. Location: Knox College, University of Toronto, 59 George St. Individual events are described above. For more information contact: Joy Gordon at 416 485-9718.

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

The Heart of Creation

Meditation: Setting God Free In the World

by John Main (ed. Laurence Freeman OSB)
Canterbury Press Norwich, 2007



Re-reading *The Heart of Creation* by John Main is like retrieving a beautiful crystal vase from the back of the cupboard. You haven't looked at it for a while and suddenly you see again its many facets of beauty and practicality. You wonder why you put it away for all that time when its richness is so evident. So it is with this new edition of a collection of talks John Main gave to meditators during the weekly meetings at the

Priory in Montreal in the late 1970s and early 80s. The relevance and power of his teachings are fresh, challenging and nourishing. Over and over you realize the clarity and rootedness each short talk offers the reader who sets out on the simple path of Christian meditation.

You are drawn into the gift of meditation by John Main's insight into the hunger we all experience for meaning and purpose. Here is an authentic teacher with personal conviction, love and compassion showing you a path that leads to self-knowledge, joy and simplicity. He is not teaching to make you comfortable or to help you escape from a wounded world, but rather John Main is encouraging you to plumb the expansive depths of your life in God and offer it in service to God's world. "...We come to understand that the great work in life is to communicate this love, to help others to see by its light."

Re-reading *The Heart of Creation* deepens your commitment to and appreciation for the gift of Christian meditation. If you are reading it for the first time, you will find it like the crystal vase – sparkling with many facets of wisdom. You will find encouragement, strength, liberation and much more. The teaching is an invitation into a loving and fulfilling way of life through the simple, twice-daily practice of silence and stillness, and the repetition of a prayer word. The reprinting of this book, and others, by John Main to mark the 25th anniversary of his death in 1982, is reason for deep gratitude to a great spiritual teacher.

– reviewed by Rev. Glenda Meakin
Stratford, ON

Sources of CCMC funding and how the funds were used for 2007

Revenues

Donations:

Newsletter	\$5,752
School	380
Council	550
National Resource Centre	5,728
Friends	8,205

Grants:

Newsletter	\$5,000
National Resource Centre	10,000
Projects (schools, retreats)	5,373
Projects (WCCM & MMI)	4,000
Fr. John Main Anniversary	7,000

Revenues:

Publications	32,566
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Expenses

Operating expenses:

Newsletter: printing and postage	\$19,463
National Resource Centre	
Rent and utilities	8,400
Supplies, printing and postage	6,730
Communications	1,524
Equipment	841
Insurance	716
Bank Charges	333
Council	3,181

Publications:

Materials, shipping, duty & taxes	19,553
Fr. John Main Anniversary, printing	6,843

Programs:

School	983
Retreats	2,911

Donations:

Friends (2006 donations)	6,691
Projects (WCCM & MMI)	4,000

Mark Schofield
Secretary/Treasurer

If you have any questions concerning the financial statement, please contact the Secretary/Treasurer at 514-481-8746 or at Christianmeditation@bellnet.ca, or by mail at P.O. Box 52, Station NDG, Montreal, QC. H4A 3P4

Details of the administrative structure and financial reports of the charity are available on the Revenue Canada website under the Charities Division.

CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY

Biennial National Conference, June 5-7, 2009

at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, 50 St. Joseph Street, Toronto, Ontario

Roots of our Tradition

with



Dom Laurence Freeman - spiritual guide and Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation and a Benedictine monk of the Olivetan Congregation. He is also the founder and director of the John Main Centre for Meditation and Inter-religious Dialogue at Georgetown University, Washington DC. Laurence Freeman is the author of many books and articles and the editor of John Main's works.



Isabelle Glover - teaches Sanskrit and is a leading expert on Pali, the language of Buddhist scriptures, and Aramaic, the dialect Jesus spoke. She is an Oblate of Ealing Abbey in West London, and was introduced to Christian meditation there by John Main in the mid-1970's. Isabelle Glover was the speaker at the first annual John Main Seminar in 1984, on the topic of 'Indian Scriptures as Christian Reading'.

The conference will also include a number of workshops relating to the teaching and practice of Christian meditation by such well known members of the Canadian community as Paul Harris, Rev. Glenda Meakin, Michel Legault and Rev. Dr. Schuyler Brown. The National Council will hold a General Meeting during the conference.

St. Michael's College is located in downtown Toronto and is easily accessible by public transportation. There will be a number of parking places available on the College property, at the going rate. Accommodation will be in student residences. A detailed programme and all other necessary information will be sent to registrants.

Registration fees:

\$275 single or double (per person) residential - includes 2 nights accommodation, 6 meals, health breaks, use of all facilities etc. - or \$200 for commuters - covers same as above except for breakfast and accommodation.

There are 100 residential and 50 commuter places. Book early to avoid disappointment.

TO REGISTER:



The World
Community for
Christian
Meditation

Please complete the form below and send to CMCT, c/o Joy Gordon, 701-581 Avenue Road, Toronto ON, M4V 2K4 together with a cheque or money order made out to Christian Meditation Community of Toronto or CMCT in the appropriate amount per above. Please note that registrations will close on Wednesday May 27, 2009. It will not be possible to provide any refunds after that date.

For additional information, contact Joy - tel. 416-485-9718; email: joyg@sympatico.ca

Registration Form to the Conference "Roots of our Tradition", June 5-7, 2009, Toronto, Ontario.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone no. _____ e-mail: _____

I wish to register as follows: Residential: Single Double or Commuter

Vegetarian meals Special health/medical needs? Specify: _____

Open House, Open Hearts continued from front

A day that had begun with a fiery sun overhead had ended for me with the stoking of a completely different kind of fire.

For Reta Hamilton, the Oblate Open House was “community come to life.” She commented: “As I witnessed the final promise of Ron Dicks, ‘listening with the ear of the heart’ as St. Benedict instructs, I relived my own oblation. It is a journey that continues daily—one of learning and of trying to be of service to the Community.”

As we talked over refreshments afterwards, I was comforted by the fact that some of my challenges and graces on the path were also experienced by others. The sense of isolation I sometimes feel was lifted by this sharing in community. Conversion for me is a minute-by-minute experience that brings awareness of just how far I have come and how far I have yet to go since this journey began. Meditation brings a sense of calm and peace; days are less frenetic, more joyful.

David Martin
Ottawa, ON



Practicalities of Practice

*Q. Do I try to make my mind blank or void in Christian meditation?
Can emptying the mind be dangerous?*

A. One of the problems we face in the teaching of Christian meditation is that in speaking about emptying our minds of concepts and images, we might inadvertently give the impression that all that remains is a vacuum or, as you refer to it, a void.

Perhaps it is better to speak in positive terms rather than in negative terms about setting aside thoughts in meditation. The interior silence we open ourselves to in meditation is filled with the *presence* of God. Sometimes it is not a felt presence, but the special knowledge we call *faith* means we can “know” in our times of meditation that the indwelling Trinity actively lives and prays within us. It has nothing to do with making our mind a void or our inner being becoming a vacuum. In meditation we open our entire body, mind and spirit to the direct experience of the Spirit of God deep within us.

The repetition of our mantra says to God “I am open to

your presence, I am resting in your presence, I am in your hands. Do whatever you will with me.” The mantra is our surrender to God and the fullness of that presence. There is no vacuum or void in this way of prayer.

At our “still point” or our “centre” we find not emptiness but God, who is love. St John of the Cross says, “God is the centre of my soul” and Julian of Norwich says, “God is the still point at my center.” The path to this centre is the way of the mantra.

The Cloud of Unknowing points out that Satan cannot enter this inner chamber of our heart in this silent prayer. The Cloud says that in this silence one can only be open to the voice of the Spirit who dwells deep within us.

— from the book *Frequently Asked Questions about Christian Meditation: The Path of Contemplative Prayer* by Paul Harris (Novalis Publishers). Paul can be reached at <paulturner-harris@aol.com>

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	8165	<i>John Main (1926-1982)</i>	2 CDs	\$15.00	_____

*Descriptions appear in the International Section, p. 8

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Meditation Group Meets Throughout Summer

Many meditation groups meet through the summer months, usually an “attendance-challenged” time of year in activities like this. One such group meets at noon every Friday at the Church of the Holy Trinity in the shadow of the Eaton Centre in downtown Toronto. This group attracts a mix: visitors to the city, working people who meditate on their lunch break, retirees, and people who work shifts.

After being invited by the pastor to establish a Christian meditation group as part of the parish ministry, Joe Bergeron has been leading the Holy Trinity group for 14 years. Proximity to concerts in the church or vicinity can be trying. Once just as Joe began his introductory comments, a live band struck up below the open window of the meditation room. He suggested that if anyone found it impossible to meditate, they should go down and enjoy the music and try to meditate again later in the afternoon. The joys of summer meditation for the group have included meditating with steel band accompaniment, meditating with a film crew standing by and inviting them to lunch afterwards, and meditating while relocated during construction.

Recently, a new, very quiet air conditioning unit was installed, making for a very pleasant meditation environment. In previous years there was either no air conditioning, inducing drowsiness, or a very loud and very old unit making pre-meditation talks near impossible and concentration difficult.

Meditators from the group say they find this historic 160-year-old church a particularly peaceful location that draws them back week after week. The church is situated above



an underground river at a site that was used by Mississauga First Nations people as a resting place where blessings were invoked for their journey up to Lake Simcoe. Thus, the site has a long history of prayerful activities. Today, next to the Church of the Holy Trinity, there are a large outdoor labyrinth walk, green space and trees, and a waterfall. These features attest to the special nature of the site and complement its traditions as a spiritual oasis in the heart of the city.

Joe suggests that meditators don't demand or expect ideal conditions and often adopt the “undefeatable” Canadian attitude to the vicissitudes of our weather. In response to extremes of hot, humid summers and long, snowy winters, Canadians just dig out and carry on. So, too, the meditator repeats the mantra and carries on!

Joseph Clarkson
Toronto, ON

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