

WHAT MAKES JACK RUN?

CANADIAN MEDITATOR AND GROUP LEADER HEADS NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST, HELPS PROVIDE 416,000 MEALS YEARLY FOR THE POOR, AND IS AN EXPERIENCED MARATHON RUNNER.

Jack Murta grew up on a family farm, near a village of 50 people in Manitoba, attended a small rural school, received a university diploma in agriculture, and then spent 18 years as a member of the Canadian parliament, including two cabinet minister posts, and 16 years as an executive in the private sector.

Today at the age of 65 he leads an even busier and active life as head of the National Prayer Breakfast in Ottawa (linked to other international prayer breakfasts), and in addition is incoming president of The Mission in Ottawa, a faith-based ministry meeting the needs of the homeless, hungry and poor. As if this isn't enough Jack is a family man with a wife Lyn, three children, and has run in over 40 marathon races in such locations as Ottawa, Boston, New York, London (UK), Chicago and Washington. To top it all off he is actively engaged in inter-faith dialogue, teaches Christian meditation, and takes turns leading one of the 40 Christian meditation groups in the Ottawa area.

The question is what makes Jack run? In a recent interview he revealed the answer in crystal clear terms. Says Jack: "A few years ago I seriously questioned how I could make a greater commitment to Jesus, bearing in mind my family and work responsibilities. This led to an inner conversion which eventually led me to join the Catholic Church, and then through the reading of Henri Nouwen and Thomas Merton I found an attraction and enthusiasm for the contemplative life. The additional teaching and practice of Christian meditation has been a tremendous gift, and I have found a loving and warm acceptance and friendship



in the weekly groups, retreats and workshops. This in turn has led me to the realization that one can share the gift of silence and stillness with followers of non-Christian faiths and that in the mutual practice of meditation we enrich each other."

Two years ago Jack brought this outreach to others in a unique way, when he invited Kevin Flynn, Dean of Anglican Studies at St. Paul University, and a leader of a Christian meditation group, to talk on Christian meditation at the annual National Prayer Breakfast held each year in Ottawa. Attended by 850

people, including members of parliament, Supreme Court justices, diplomats, senators, inter-faith representatives, and business and community leaders, Kevin not only spoke about John Main and the teaching but managed to have the diverse attendees meditate for 15 minutes.

Jack also organizes the weekly Prayer Breakfast on Parliament Hill. This is a time when Members of Parliament from all the various political parties who meet to dialogue and pray together. Says Jack: "In these non-partisan gatherings, members are not only given the chance to know one another better and develop deep friendships, but they also have the opportunity to recognize the presence of God in each other's lives. The exercise of effective political leadership has always demanded that such positive relationships need to be fostered across party lines. Such relationships facilitate the working of our Canadian parliament."

He also stresses that these Prayer Breakfasts are all about building relationships and are not involved with seeking to

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WHAT MAKES JACK RUN? *continued from front*

convert people to Christianity. He says this means building relationships not only with political opponents, but with Christians of various denominations and with people from various faith groups. He does say, though, it all boils down to the great commandment of Jesus – love of one’s neighbour.

Having been on the Board of Directors of the Ottawa Mission for a number of years, taking on the presidency of this organization gives Jack a unique opportunity to guide a faith-based institution that offers services and programs to meet the ever changing needs of the homeless in Ottawa. Jack points out that currently The Mission provides food, clothing, shelter, skills training, as well as faith and hope for the homeless in need. Hot meals are provided for an average of 1250 people a day and sleeping facilities for 250 people a night. Some 750 volunteers assist The Mission in its programs including serving about 416,000 meals in 2008.

As one might guess Jack is not a hands-off executive at The Mission. According to observers, he becomes personally engaged with the homeless, and gives talks on meditation along with other specialists who offer yoga and addiction therapy. He also spends time each week serving meals, and this past Christmas brought his family to help the chefs with a post-Christmas meal. The Mission has won great respect in Ottawa for its spirit of compassion and spirituality which includes an inter-denominational religious service each day at 11.00 a.m., a hospice for the seriously ill, an educational program, a dental clinic and ongoing support for drug and alcohol addiction.

When questioned about the relationship between prayer and action being both sides of the same coin, Jack is quite adamant about the spiritual basis of his activity on behalf of the poor and his interest in promoting inter-faith dialogue.

Says Jack: “John Main continually reminds us in his talks that the practice of Christian meditation draws us into reality itself, not only ultimate reality but the reality of everyday life around us. My own observation is that the practice itself becomes a reservoir of spiritual vitality that pours itself out in the most varied kinds of social action. I feel that what we do with our lives outwardly, how well we care for others, is as much a part of meditation as what we do in turning inward to the stillness.”

He continues: “Meister Eckhart, the great 13th-century Dominican priest, said that once meditators find silence and stillness in the practice of meditation, they must not ignore worldly affairs and responsibilities.” He reminds us that the world around us is real and also has its rights. Says Eckhart: “God is present to us everywhere, both in and out of meditation.” A good point to ponder. Like the prophets of old, the person who meditates has an “inner eye” awakened to suffering and injustice in the world and suddenly realizes they cannot refuse the call to action.

St Paul says, “We are all running in a race to win.” Jack Murta, the marathoner, is indeed running and running hard.

Paul Harris
Ottawa, ON
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Review of New Film *Silence in the City*

There is great new DVD, produced by the Australian Christian Meditation Community, titled *Silence in the City – Young Christian Meditators’ Stories*. A short film – only 10 minutes – by Claire Morgan, it “explores the importance of Christian meditation in the lives of a group of young people who meet to meditate in the busy heart of Sydney, Australia.” Claire and fellow meditator John Shields tell their own stories, while Celia Carroll introduces the group and brings to life the history of this ancient form of Christian prayer. Blending movement and music with silence and space, the film draws viewers into what meditation teacher Giovanni Felicioni describes as “the moment of Christ.”

To quote Fr. Laurence Freeman, “The young today often feel the pressures and fears of modern life very intensely even as they sense the great potential within themselves and hold out hope for our world. This film, with its powerful witness from young Christian meditators, situates these issues in a spiritual and faith context.”

It is a most refreshing and modern film, excellent both in audio-visual quality and content. I have recently shown it on two occasions, to a workshop of 25 Ottawa area group leaders and a group of 35 new meditators who participated in our 6-week “Introduction to Christian Meditation”. In both cases, the response was extremely positive with some people seeking to borrow or buy the film. They found it really spoke to them and that it was relevant for everyone, not just the young people for whom it was intended.

Because it is short and of such high quality, it readily lends itself to weekly meditation group meetings, or any other meeting where we wish to give a feel for the impact of Christian meditation on people’s lives. And it could, of course, be particularly helpful for meditators interested in introducing Christian meditation to young people – whether in schools, churches or their own families.

Flora Benoit
Ottawa, ON

Silence in the City can be ordered on page C11.

From the National Coordinator

Horizons

This is the second time that I've found myself driving across the prairie as the deadline for NewsNotes approaches. So, once again, my thoughts turned to the landscape and possible connections with meditation. This time I was struck by the beauty and effect of the stubble poking through the layer of snow.

Stubble doesn't sound as if it could be considered beautiful but there it was – shining and golden in the sunlight, outlined against the crisp, white snow. Perhaps that is one of the fruits of meditation – being able to see beauty in unexpected places. The world around us is full of possibilities for wonder, but we are often too busy to notice. Our practice of meditation helps us to slow down and be contemplative, increasing the possibility for us to appreciate the beauty of Creation. Even in the city those opportunities are there. We can appreciate God's gift of human creativity and ingenuity, and become more acutely aware of the ways in which we have misused that gift.

The effect of the stubble is that the way it catches the wind-driven snow, allowing it to settle on the land rather than blowing away and gathering in drifts in ditches. One way of looking at meditation is to see it as a way to catch some of the wind of God, the Spirit, allowing it to settle on us. It's interesting that the Hebrew word *ruah* means both wind

and spirit. Our meditation practice is the stubble that holds on to the wind that would otherwise blow straight past us. We become receptive to the Spirit of God, who stays with us, dwells in us and who is the agent of transformation in our lives.

It was noticeable, too, that in the fields which had been cultivated, and where there was no stubble, they had a much thinner covering of snow. There were patches of bare earth. In the spring as the winds continue to blow and the fields dry out they will lose some of the rich layer of topsoil. When we have periods when we are not as consistent in our meditation practice, it is as if we have no stubble; we dry out, and we lose some of the rich benefits available to us through meditation.

Even the word *stubble* sounds very basic and drab. There's nothing exotic about it. Meditation is very basic too. Its beauty is in its simplicity. The twice-daily routine is not glamorous; discipline rarely is. But the benefits are truly remarkable and a witness to the work of the Spirit – a sign of the love of God who invites us into an ever deepening relationship.

Phil Barnett
National Coordinator
Winnipeg, MB

★ REMINDER ★

Roots of our Tradition – CCMC National Conference, June 5-7

There is still space (residential and commuter) available for this year's Biennial National Conference, taking place at St. Michael's College on the University of Toronto campus.

PLENARY SESSIONS – talks by Isabelle Glover, keynote speaker at the first John Main Seminar in 1984, and Fr. Laurence Freeman.

WORKSHOPS with Paul Harris, Rev. Glenda Meakin, Michel Legault and Rev. Dr. Schuyler Brown.

SCHEDULED MEDITATION SESSIONS, music, readings and liturgy.

A wonderful opportunity to meet with meditators from across the country in a true spirit of community.

SEE FLYER/REGISTRATION FORM IN THIS ISSUE

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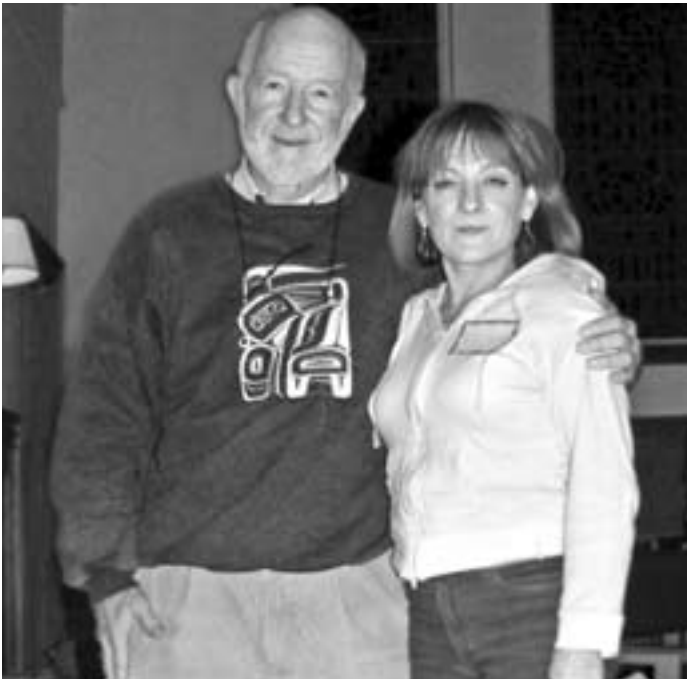
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Father Terry Gallagher and Kathy Murtha

ADVENT 2008 CHRISTIAN MEDITATION SERIES

Scarboro Missions has made a commitment to exploring the rich spiritual and meditative traditions of the Christian faith and make this accessible to the general Christian population. For a number of years, Fr. Terry Gallagher has facilitated an Advent and Lenten Series which has been extremely well attended. This past Advent, topics included John Main, Praying with St. Augustine, and Praying with Julian of Norwich.

On December 17 Peter McKenna, S.C.J., and Kathy Murtha, Director of the Scarboro Mission Centre, co-presented on the topic of Prayer of the Heart. Kathy and Fr. Peter created a participatory, prayerful presentation by including meditative chant, silence, a 5-minute video, "Has anyone told you how much you are loved?", and a meditation period.

The chant set the tone of the evening: "Speak Lord, I am listening, let your word be done unto me, may it find a home in me," as the speakers stressed the need for an attitude of listening, of awareness, of presence to life, and of openness to mystery. Meditation can help us to be more open to the voice of Love, to join in Mary's *yes* to God.

The heart is the place of presence in human relationships, the place where we meet others. The heart naturally leans towards wonder, intelligence, gratitude, awe, intuition, imagination. Coming home to the heart brings us home to the wholeness of who we are. Entering the place of the heart

is surrendering to the Spirit. Meditation is a journey to our heart, to nurture our awareness of the presence of God and to live out of the heart.

In the latter part of the presentation, three movements of the heart were traced: opening the heart, placing the heart in the presence of God, and entering into solidarity with the living breathing heart of the world. In this third movement, we are impelled by God's love to act, to become the hands and feet of Jesus to our brothers and sisters and to all of creation. Living in the present moment is the key to living in the heart of God, becoming conscious of God's presence in and around us, living in the sacrament of the moment.

Fr. Peter and Kathy left us with questions: What would the world be like if everyone identified themselves with this notion of heart instead of with the mind/head and feelings? What additional daily steps can we take to be more aware of the message to cultivate prayer of the heart and living out of the heart?

Joseph Clarkson
Toronto, ON

ST. MARY'S MEDITATION GROUP BRANDON, MANITOBA

Steve Cassidy, a lay reader at St. Mary's, started our group just over a year ago. We meet weekly (six to eight people) at St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church. Steve is the only experienced meditator in our group, so it has been a wonderful Spirit-filled learning adventure for the rest of us.

In July 2008, Karen Fraser, Area Coordinator for Manitoba/NW Ontario, spent an evening with our group. Her visit was most welcome and informative, making us aware of the various resources available and events being hosted by Winnipeg groups.

We organized an evening workshop in November with Rev. Phil Barnett, National Coordinator, as guest speaker. Phil reviewed the history of silent prayer, highlighting Father John Main's story. We were happy to welcome newcomers to Christian meditation.

In January this year we participated in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, forming a prayer team to visit and pray (aloud and silently) for the needs of other churches in Brandon. On the Wednesday we went to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and Thursday to St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church. The response to our visits was very positive, both for us and our hosts, so we are planning for next year.

Helen Nethery
Brandon, MB

FAR AND NEAR

INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN MEDITATION: THE FIRST 20 YEARS

On January 29, Marilyn Metcalfe used a biographical format to make her presentation on Christian meditation to the Toronto community. She mused that, over her lifetime, there were times when her heart was not ready to be opened to the mystery of God, when God was last on her list of things to do. She was more involved in “human doing” than in “human being.” She knew that the Spirit was there, always beckoning but, she confesses, she wasn’t listening. Marilyn laughingly recounted that she was too busy to take the time to read the newspaper article describing Christian meditation before attending her first meeting. “If I had known I’d have to sit silently for 25 minutes, I might not have gone. I have a deep sense of gratitude to the founding group members in Ajax for sharing this priceless gift of meditation and opportunity to grow in spirit.”

Marilyn used the topics from the six-week Introduction to Christian Meditation program to organize her reflections, while weaving in personal details such as her later commitment to becoming a Benedictine Oblate.

Currently, she leads two meditation groups and has introduced meditation to children at Sunday school. She is always finding innovative ways to introduce people to Christian meditation, including working with inter-faith groups and introducing people to the peace and prayer of labyrinth walks. During Advent and Lent she also leads retreat days where meditation is an integral part of the program.

Marilyn’s growth in her prayer life has fueled her involvement in a number of outreach initiatives. She is engaged in the struggle against human suffering everywhere, demonstrating to us that the Spirit is transforming meditators, and our world, at the same time.

Joseph Clarkson
Toronto, ON

EVENING INTRO TO MEDITATION & LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP, GOING DEEPER

Over 40 participants listened to Rev. Phil Barnett, National Coordinator of the Canadian Christian Meditation Community, as he shared his own journey into finding Christian meditation and how it changed his life. “Too often our prayers are talking to God instead of listening to him,” he said. “We should be listening and let him come into our lives. Meditation is this way of listening.” The talk, *An Introduction to Christian Meditation*, was held at the church hall of St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Vancouver’s eastside on Friday January 30.



The event was organized by the Christian Meditation Community of B.C. to introduce the practice to a wider audience. Participants described the talk as inspiring and informative. While some were experienced meditators, a majority were new to meditation and some expressed deep interest in pursuing the initiative.

The following day, a workshop for leaders and potential leaders was held at St. Edmund’s Church in North Vancouver. Entitled *Going Deeper: A Workshop for Meditation Groups*, also led by Rev. Phil Barnett, the workshop attracted more than 30 participants.

Discourse on experiences in leadership roles, how to perform these roles fully and effectively and other topics of interest to existing groups as well as to those contemplating starting one, produced animated small group discussions. It was a fruitful day of learning and reflection that ended with a closing talk by Fr. John Barry, pastor of St. Edmund’s, himself a practicing meditator. “In our everyday lives, there is a need for silence,” he said, adding that “meditation opens the way for more understanding between peoples, as it transcends language and religion where everybody can participate in the quest for inner peace through the recitation of the mantra.”

Ted Alcuitas
Vancouver, BC

ARNPRIOR MEDITATION GROUP HOSTS EVENING AT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Coming Home – a film and discussion on Christian Meditation – the Path to Contemplation was the topic for an evening event on February 23 at the Arnprior Public Library, hosted by the Arnprior Christian Meditation Group. Jean Anderchek gave a brief explanation of Christian meditation and told of her personal experience – ways her life has been positively affected since she started on this path.

The film was followed by a group discussion, led by Mary Sue McCarthy, that covered a wide spectrum of thoughts on the discipline, practices and benefits.

After 20 minutes of meditation everyone was invited to browse a display of the library’s holdings on Christian meditation, donated by our local group. Also available for sale were two books by Paul Harris that were well received by attendees. The evening concluded with refreshments.

Margaret McDougall
Arnprior, Ontario

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Flora Benoit, Paul Harris, Philip Jurgens (librarian)
and Florence Marquis-Kawecki

PAUL HARRIS SPEAKS AT PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Ottawa coordinating committee sponsored a Christian meditation evening at the Ottawa Public Library, February 24. The subject: *Christian Meditation: A Contemplative Path*. The session included a talk by Paul Harris, a meditation period, question/answer session, and a mounted display of the teaching.

The event highlighted the donation to the library of resource materials on Christian meditation. Among the informational handouts given to the 55 attendees was a bookmark listing 30 books, CDs and DVDs now available in multiple copies through the library's branches. We gratefully acknowledge the tremendous support from staff of the Ottawa Public Library over the past year.

In conjunction with the Ottawa event, the meditation groups in Arnprior, near Ottawa, held an information session at their library (see separate article).

We are grateful to Paul Harris for his generosity in sharing his wisdom and experience with us. Directing his talk to newcomers as well as ongoing meditators, Paul included a story of a visit by Canadian meditators to Mother Teresa at her religious community in Calcutta in 1991. He recounted her endorsement of the practice of Christian meditation and the fact that she had set aside a time, morning and evening, for silent prayer in the daily agenda of her Missionaries of Charity. She emphasized to the group that "all great things happen in silence" and that meditation was indeed the base of her well-known work with the sick and dying, not only in India but around the world.

She said, "God is the friend of silence, his language is silence. We need to find this God within in order to touch souls, to heal others and to offer compassionate service to others. Commitment to meditation is this fuel that powers a life of service to others."

Paul ended his talk with a beautiful quotation from St Augustine:

Beauty ever ancient, ever new
Too late have I loved you;
I was outside, and you were within me
And I never found you
Until I found you within myself.

Flora Benoit
Ottawa Area Coordinator

View the list of titles referred to in the second paragraph above at www.meditatio.ca. Ottawa meditators can help bolster this collection by using the library's "suggestion to purchase" feature at www.biblioottawalibrary.ca/forms/formindex_e.cfm.



BELOVED MEDITATOR CLAIRE CHARBONNEAU DIES AT 83

On December 6, 2008 we learned with great sadness of the passing of Claire Charbonneau. Claire was known and respected as one of the pioneers of Christian meditation in Ottawa. She was instrumental in founding one of Ottawa's first francophone groups.

In the eulogy at the funeral Mass on December 13, her daughter Danielle spoke of the importance of meditation in Claire's life: "My mother had undertaken a long interior journey that led her to the path of meditation. Through meditation a revelation of the Divine unfolded within her. It was because of her continuous, unflagging practice of meditation... that she came to love her daily life in which she could discern the divine Presence. This Presence was at

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the very core of her being and her entire spiritual quest was focused on its contemplation.”

In the homily, Fr. Benoit Garceau, OMI, himself a meditator, mentioned that Claire loved the story of the meeting of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. “I think it taught her something precious for her spiritual life: that God is an encounter that happens within... ‘If you would only know the gift of God,’ said Jesus to the Samaritan woman. ‘If you would only know that the Source is within yourself, the Source that is the gift.’ This gospel narrative showed Claire the road to take in order to live her life more intensely, following “the path within.”

Claire had a great desire to see God. She cultivated that desire over the last ten years through her daily meditation. Though meditation helped her to find inner peace, she meditated first and foremost to give God a chance to be God freely in her life and to dispose herself to receive from Him the ineffable gift of his love. God created us in love, for love, so that we may have fullness of life through the act of loving.

This great love is the legacy Claire left us. We will never forget her love for Jesus, her faithful practice of meditation, her devotion and continuous support to the meditation group at Sacré-Cœur Parish. Claire, we keep you in our hearts – you were a source of inspiration – you touched our lives with your love.

Florence Marquis-Kawecki
Ottawa, ON

This is a translation. The original text, in French, can be found on www.meditatio.ca



NEW GROUP IN KINGSTON, ONTARIO

On December 9, 2008, St. Paul’s Anglican Church in Kingston, Ontario, hosted a group of 12 people, including three clergy, who were interested in Christian Meditation. The Rector, Rev. David Ward, and Rosalind Weston, kindly served soup and sandwiches for lunch. This was followed by a talk by Ron Dicks, Ontario Regional Coordinator of CCMC. Ron’s talk was an introduction to Christian Meditation.

Following a brief discussion period seven persons made a commitment to begin a group. It is hoped that in the Spring there will be a more widely publicized meeting which may build the group. Meantime they began meeting on January 6 with a good supply of literature and CDs.

Ron Dicks,
Ottawa, ON

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR MEDITATING

- 1 Try to meditate at the same time each day, If you have regular times, your mind and body begin to recognize that these are times to quiet down.
- 2 Try to set aside a place that’s reserved only for meditation. Your mind and body in time will come to recognize that this is the sacred place to be still.
- 3 Select a chair that helps you to keep your spinal column erect during meditation. If your head, neck and spine are naturally in a straight line, it will be easier to remain alert. The back of your chair should ideally come no higher than mid-back. If it is too high you will tend to slump forward and possibly fall asleep.
- 4 Use a non ticking timer so you don’t have to keep looking at your watch to see if your meditation period is up. A “ticking” timer usually destroys any attempt to focus. Timing tapes, on either CD or cassette tapes, can be purchased, or you can make your own music-silence- music tapes.
- 5 Make your meditation period a priority. Schedule it into your daily activities just as you would for eating, a doctor’s appointment or a favourite TV program.
- 6 It is best to meditate before a meal. The brain is less alert when the body is busy spending its resources digesting food.
- 7 There are many ways to begin your meditation period. Some people light a candle, symbolic of the presence of Christ. Some read a psalm or a gospel passage for the day. Others will read a short excerpt from John Main’s teaching. Some people will simply breathe deeply several times while tensing and releasing different muscle groups to trigger the “relaxation response”. Some people will splash water on their faces to make sure they are wide awake and alert. Others take off their shoes. All these are personal choices; whatever you choose to do is OK.
- 8 Stick to the allotted time. Don’t extend your meditation if it is going well and don’t cut it short if it is going poorly. Be faithful and be gentle with yourself.
- 9 “Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good.” In other words, do what you are able to do in the present moment. Don’t wait for the perfect time, place, mood, and circumstances. Just make a start. Jump in and get wet.

Paul Harris
Ottawa, ON

The Legacies of Thomas Merton and John Main



Merton

A Dance

December 10, 2008, on the 40th anniversary of Thomas Merton's death, I had the privilege of sharing with the Christian meditation group at Mount St. Mary's, Charlotte-town, his contribution to the contemplative mystic within each of us. Merton's life could be divided into two parts: the first 26 years, years of searching, travelling, studying, becoming a Catholic in 1938 and entering the monastic order of Cistercians (Trappists) in 1941. In the second part – 1941-1968 – he was a monk for 27 years, the last three as a hermit monk, having been instrumental in restoring the eremitic (hermit) vocation to the cenobitic (communal) Trappists in 1964.

Merton modeled for us, in the ebb and flow of his own life, the journey of silence and solitude to contemplation and, indeed, mysticism. In his more than 29 books, plus other writings including essays and poetry, he detailed this contemplative-mystic journey of small steps, taken daily. In so many ways, these steps are a dance of openness, creativity and imagination, challenging us to move “gracefully” into the unknown, into Mystery.

On this anniversary evening, the conversation about Thomas Merton was different from my other conversations marking this occasion. I spoke not only of Merton but also of John Main. Born Douglas Main, he entered a diocesan seminary in the 1940s, studied in Rome, left the seminary, studied and taught law, traveled to the Far East as part of the British Colonial Service, joined the Benedictines in 1959, and was ordained John Main in 1963. In the early

1970s, he began a Christian meditation group at Ealing Abbey in England and then in 1977, at the invitation of Bishop Leonard Crowley in Montreal, he opened a Benedictine priory there for Christian meditation. Over time, these many meditation groups grew into the World Community for Christian Meditation.



Main

Each of these two great contemplative men, through their own giftedness of learning to live into life, one step at a time, would show us ways of tapping into our unique contemplative rhythms, no matter one's lifestyle. Indeed, each provided different steps to the same dance. The small daily steps both Merton and Main took in their lives are the steps that have become a global dance for many of us.

Learning the Steps

It would seem that becoming spiritual is all about learning daily to dance with, and into life, with an unselfconsciousness and openness to Mystery. Many dancers begin with small steps, steps to a rhythm that, over time, becomes silent. With both Merton and Main, it took several years for their unique steps to become manifest. In 1915, Merton was born in Prades, France. In 1926, Main was born in London, England. Both were influenced by the cultural and political events of the early twentieth century. Both studied the contemplative-mystical religions of the East. Both men had any number of “missteps” in finding their own gifted rhythms, yet both men stayed with the many “dance” teachers in their lives until each reached a point of moving

contemplatively to the musical silence of the Teacher deep within.

Both men died as relatively young monks, both in the Benedictine tradition. Merton, at 53 years of age, died by electrocution December 10, 1968 in Bangkok, Thailand. Main, at 56, died of cancer December 30, 1982, in Montreal. In between the alpha and omega points of their lives, each was open to God speaking to him not in the mighty winds of pomp and circumstance but rather in the small, quiet voice of silence-solitude each struggled to learn. This is their timeless gift to us.

What is Your Legacy?

There are many other amazing similarities between these two men. Suffice it to note here, that like us, they too had clay feet. Their legacies teach us the paramount impor-

tance of discovering and nurturing our own unique gifts and talents. Like them, each of us, in our own mundane, yet special lives, has a very unique contribution to make, a contribution no one else can make. Like them, we have to learn the particular steps of the mystical dance of our lives. Like them, we learn these steps in the daily contemplative rhythm of our own nuanced silence and solitude. Only then can we enter into the rhythm of the global dance, a mystical dance of myriad steps, each of us humming our own "Mara-natha" mantra.

This summary of our last Christian meditation evening before Christmas was written by Janet Malone, Charlottetown, author, poet, futuristic dreamer and friend.

Sr. Kathleen Bolger
Charlottetown, PE

Calendar of Events

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

April

24-25 April, Winnipeg MB *Fully Alive: A Christian Meditation and Yoga Retreat* Presented by: Casey Rock, a yoga teacher and meditator from Toronto. Date: Friday evening and all day Saturday, April 24 & 25. For more information, contact Karen Fraser at 204 831-0706

30 April, Toronto ON *Seeing and Intuition*, by Erika Deery, CMCT Member. Time: 7 to 9 p.m. Location: Knox College, University of Toronto, 59 St. George Street. Contact: Joy Gordon at 416 485-9718.

May

23 May, Arnprior ON *Meditating with the Mystics featuring Julian of Norwich*, by Sister Anne Kathleen McLaughlin. Location: St. John Chrysostom Church, 295 Albert Street, Arnprior. Time: Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Registration from 9:30 a.m.) Cost: suggested donation \$25. Refreshments and catered lunch included. Registration deadline: May 9. Contact: Jean Anderchek at 613 832-3436.

28 May, Toronto ON *Poverty as Riches: Thomas Merton on Contemplative Prayer*, by Rev. Glenda Meakin, CMCT Member. Time: 7 to 9 p.m. Location: Knox College, University of Toronto, 59 St. George Street. Contact: Joy Gordon at 416 485-9718.

29-30 May, Montreal QC A two-day workshop given by Fr. Thomas Keating on Centering Prayer at St. Joseph's Oratory, 3800 Queen Mary Road. In English with French simultaneous translation. Cost \$120 per participant with a \$100 tax receipt. For further information and on-line registration see www.our-project.org

June

5-7 June, Toronto ON *Roots of our Tradition*. CCMC's Biennial National Conference will be held at St. Michael's Colleegeon the University of Toronto's downtown campus. Keynote speakers: Fr. Laurence Freeman and Isabelle Glover. Residential and Commuter spaces available. Don't delay. Register now. See details and registration form in the full-page flyer in this newsletter.

19-21 June, Rougemont QC *Meditation Retreat* Presenter: Polly Schofield from archives or retreats given by Dom John Main OSB. Venue: Cistercian Monastery, Rougemont, QC. Register early since there are only 27 rooms available. Room with shared bath \$100 or private bath \$130. For more information, contact Magda Jass at 514 489-0998

25 June, Toronto ON *Swami Satyananda*, by Clem Sauv , CMCT Member. Time: 7 to 9 p.m. Location: Knox College, University of Toronto, 59 St. George Street. 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.

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:



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: _____

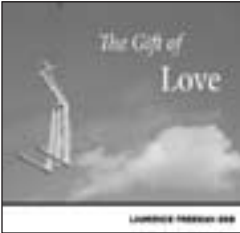
PUBLICATIONS



The Journey of Meditation
LAURENCE FREEMAN OSB

CD #8017 \$12.00
 DVD #8018 \$20.00

A lucid presentation of the essential teaching on Christian Meditation. Fr. Laurence explains the significance of meditation to the prayer life of the Christian, and describes the stages and fruits of the contemplative journey.



The Gift of Love
LAURENCE FREEMAN OSB

CD #6200 \$20.00

Fr Laurence teaches how love of self and of neighbour both arise from our experience of the love of God. We sense our being as a gift that can be fully understood in the divine gift of self revealed in Jesus. To receive this gift, we need poverty of spirit which then empowers us to make the gift of our self to others. Meditation is entering into that poverty of spirit



The Contemplative Executive
PETER NG KOK SONG

CD #6201 \$12.00

"The first challenge for the executive is to take a step away from the busyness of the business world." Peter says he found this step in the simple practicality of John Main's teaching on meditation. In this practice, the executive attends to the "business of businesses", which is to allow the work of God to be done in us. Priorities then fall into place.



Silence in the City
CLAIRE MORGAN

DVD #5090 \$15.00

This short film by Claire Morgan explores the importance of Christian Meditation in the lives of a group of young people who meet to meditate in the busy heart of Sydney, Australia. Claire and a fellow meditator, John Shields, tell their own stories, while Celia Carroll introduces the group and brings to life the history of this ancient form of Christian prayer.

See review on page C2.

Canadian Christian Meditation Community – Newsnotes – Publications

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_____	6200	Laurence Freeman – <i>The Gift of Love</i>	CD	\$20.00	_____
_____	6201	Peter Ng Kok Song – <i>The Contemplative Executive</i>	CD	\$12.00	_____
_____	5090	Claire Morgan – <i>Silence in the City</i>	DVD	\$15.00	_____

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Notes from a talk given at Unitas in Montreal

The Spirit who is mind and heart and vast spaces – enfolds the whole universe, and in silence – is loving to all. This is the Spirit in my heart.

This ancient Hindu Upanishad was Father John Main's favourite. He quoted it often. Again, *Spirit enfolds the whole universe and is loving to All*. This Life Force, this Creative Spirit – in your heart and in mine – is love.

Father John would often remind us so passionately, almost impatiently, that “the power of Him, who raised Christ from the dead, dwells in our hearts.” Everything is possible for us. Achieved and given, as gift. He told me once on one of our walks that the only thing that he knew how to do was to love. I was quite speechless, and he didn't elaborate, just simply stated it as fact – hoping, I think, that I realized that it is really, very definitely, the only thing that matters. We are given this life to come to know this through our own experience. Though it is beyond knowledge as St. Paul says.

This is why we meditate – to come to be one with the prayer of Christ, the only prayer – holding all others – that is the love between Him and the Father. This love, the Spirit, is within our own hearts. **The mantra, if we are humble, reverent, faithful, asking for nothing, but forgetting ourselves, will lead us in ever deepening silence, into Communion.** We will come to know that we are already One – One with the All.

“...oh that today you may listen to his voice, harden not your hearts,” intones the Rule of Saint Benedict, quoting Psalm 95. We must be open to the supreme fact of presence, the presence of the Divine in creation – and listen with the heart. Listen to Him who is the anchor, the ground of our being from which, as a flower growing from within,

we grow, develop and live in a gradual unfolding, a gentle transformation.

Father John often said that most of the world's problems are spiritual problems – requiring a spiritual solution. There is a desperate need for rootedness and depth in our confused, violent society, to keep alive the pure experience of the Divine within. In an age cramped more and more by the finite, the materialistic, we must honour the call to respect the integrity of creation. The health of society, of the individual, the environment, depends essentially upon the depth to which the experience of Ultimate Reality has penetrated it. Meditation takes us from all dividedness – to the Centre – where we find the Centre of All.

Father John reminded us time and time again, to take our vocation seriously; not to trivialize ourselves, not to trivialize each other. All the power for transformation, for infinite expansion of consciousness that goes beyond fear into liberty is already given, and the twice-daily meditation is the reminder – that the power of Him who raised Christ from the dead is in our hearts. Everything is given for the journey. All we have to do is take the first step – to take up our cross – to leave ourselves behind – to be transformed into limitlessness. One good man or woman, Father John said, can transform the world. One feeble light can illuminate a dark hall. We are so intimately connected, you, me – redeemed by Love – as ONE. Yes, we are our brothers' keepers! There is no *my holiness* without *your holiness*, and no man is an island. Consciousness can influence the physical world.

**Polly Schofield
Montreal, QC**

*Unitas is a bilingual, ecumenical center in Montreal
dedicated to teaching meditation in the tradition of John Main*

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
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