

My Meditation Journey *Testimony of a Young Meditator*

Elise Skinner is one of the Ottawa community's two young meditators. Her mother Pauline took the six-week Introduction to Christian Meditation course in 2007 and subsequently taught Elise how to meditate. Elise attended her first silent retreat in 2008 and, in 2009, immersed herself in the six-week course, the Canadian National Conference and essential teaching training at the School.

My journey... I kept thinking, how do I make sense of that? How do you talk about silence? In preparation for today, I turned to nature for inspiration. Thankfully, inspiration is in no short supply when surrounded by spring's splendor. So often on my morning walk, I am struck by the radiant green of the leaves and shoots: the bright green you only catch in spring.

We often use colour to describe things. I can say, "a leaf is green." But such a description is inadequate even if we are only talking in terms of colour. Colour, whether the red petals of a tulip or the bright green of the first ginkgo leaves, is the visible light that the petal or leaves do not absorb. A green leaf is green because it is absorbing every other kind of visible light but green. In other words, what I can see, through colour, is the complement of all I cannot see. So it is with meditation. My words, like colour, are inadequate to describe meditation. Though I will tell you about my experience, it is the equivalent of saying a leaf is green. Just as we all understand colour differently, my experience is also subjective. We can nonetheless have a shared understanding of the language of colour.

This preface aside, I first came to Christian meditation after a difficult last year of university. I had taken on a heavy course load, was working two stressful jobs and struggling to maintain a strong academic record. I didn't know why I was doing any of it. I was lost. I knew I was lost. I also had no idea how to get "unlost." This situation led me to face my limitations and the fact that I'd wrapped up my sense of self and self worth in my ability to perform. With time, I

realized I lacked a deeper sense of purpose.

At that time, I really wanted a map. Maybe a GPS device. Even someone to tell me what to do. Finding purpose, however, does not come prepackaged. Searching for meaning and purpose is very much a search and it occurs on many levels. Part of this search brought me first to a Buddhist meditation practice, and later to Christian meditation, which was introduced to me by my mother. Not long after, a weekend retreat became my first in-depth introduction to Christian meditation. Since that time I have kept returning to the practice. I don't think I'm a shining example of discipline but I keep returning to it, as faithfully as I can.

My practice is not perfect. It is a struggle, as it is for many people, to balance shifting schedules and long hours. It is also a challenge of faith. More than sitting still, it is the challenge of the journey, of staying on the path of meditation. I struggle with competing parts of myself. Parts of me are afraid and resistant to the person that faith and love call me to be. Love may call me to a place I would rather not be. Unpacking fears that surface on the journey is not easy; it takes time and support. It requires sorting and deciding what to keep and what to let go. Most of all, it is not easy to give up on an idea of who we think we are. That said, I have needed time away from the practice. I have been encouraged by the Community. It was validating to know that it's okay to take time, it's okay to seek out external support. It helped normalize this challenge.

On more than one occasion, I've heard it suggested that the real test (if there can be a test) of meditation is to ask oneself, "Am I more loving?" My response is that I keep returning to the practice, even if mine is imperfect and even if I am distracted. I cannot pin it down with my finger or with a pen. There is great love in silence.

Continued on page C2

IN THIS ISSUE

Practicalities of Practice.....	C2
From the National Coordinator.....	C3
News from Far and Near.....	C4–C5
The Healing Silence.....	C5
John Main Seminar 2010 in Canterbury.....	C6
The Gift of Simplicity.....	C7

Calendar of Events.....	C8
Note on Support/Note on Inserts.....	C9
Poetry and quotation.....	C10
New Books.....	C11
Encountering the Divine in Beauty.....	C12

Testimony of the young meditator *continued from front page*

Although we don't meditate for results, it's hard to talk about meditation without talking about how it changes and affects one's life. It is often said that meditation helps one to be more mindful, to be more present. What does being more present mean, concretely? Personally, it has helped me listen better to others. I'm less anxious with thoughts about the past or the future, the kind of thoughts that keep me in my own head rather than engaged with others. It helps me reset my mind to what is important and essential. To just "be there." This is something I carry with me, through my day: to stay open, receptive, permeable. I don't hold on to things as much and this gives space for forgiveness, for people to be different, for me to be different.

Some words about the Christian Meditation Community

Community is so important, yet so challenging when past experience of it has been limited to friends and family. It takes time to trust, to be open. I've been well supported and encouraged by the Christian Meditation Community in my

practice. For this, I am deeply grateful.

I am reminded of a quote by Jean Vanier: "A community gradually discovers as it grows that it is not there simply for itself. It belongs to humanity. It has received a gift which must bear fruit for the sake of others."

Growing the Garden

I'd like to turn once again to the theme of nature. For a few years now, I've dabbled in gardening. Shifting accommodations often restricted this to a balcony or to a small back lot. To be honest, my gardens have not met great success. Since I started to meditate, it's helped me to see why. For my garden to flourish, I must tend it daily. I must tend to it regularly and not just when the whim suits me. I'm learning to garden. To paraphrase one of Thomas Fuller's famous quotes (*Gnomologia*, 1732), "Many things grow in [my] garden that were never sown there."

Elise Skinner
Ottawa, ON



Practicalities of Practice

Q. Is there a special call to this way of prayer or is everybody invited?

A. I suggest the answer is yes to both of these questions. Karl Rahner, the great 20th-century theologian, was adamant that contemplative prayer "is not confined to a privileged few but is a universal call to each and every Christian." He also added that this way of prayer "occurs within the framework of normal graces."

Thomas Merton insisted that the fall from paradise in Genesis was a fall from the contemplative state and a loss of the original unity with God. Merton also came to realize that contemplation was not a call to a chosen few but a universal call to everyone. In the book *What is Contemplation*, Merton writes:

The seeds of contemplation are planted in every Christian soul at Baptism. But seeds must grow and develop before you reap the harvest. There are thousands of Christians walking about the face of the earth bearing in their bodies the infinite God

of whom they know practically nothing. The seeds of contemplation have been planted in these souls, but they merely lie dormant. They do not germinate.

The Cloud of Unknowing says that this way of silent prayer is open to even the most unlearned person. The author of the *Cloud* also adds that this way of prayer is simply a normal development of the ordinary Christian life.

However it would seem that God also offers a unique call to each one of us. Thomas Merton puts it well when he says "we become contemplative when God discovers Himself in us." We must always remember that the call to meditation is a gift and a grace from God: "if today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts". (Psalm 95:8)

From the book *Frequently Asked Questions About Christian Meditation: The Path of Contemplative Prayer*, by Paul Harris (Novalis Publishers). Paul can be reached at paulturnerharris@aol.com

From the National Coordinator

Horizons

When I was in England this summer I visited the stone circle at Avebury. I was very impressed. Older and larger than Stonehenge, it was built about 5000 years ago, originally consisting of 98 standing stones, some of which weighed 40 tons. They were erected in a circle 400 metres in diameter, and surrounded by a ditch 21 metres wide and 11 metres deep. What struck me most was the immense undertaking this was, and the incredible urge there must be that drives the desire to create such a place. As a human race we have an innate need for ritual and for worship, which makes us want to design and build such spaces.

That same desire is very evident in the Christian tradition. I visited the cathedrals at Canterbury and Chartres. When they were constructed in the 11th and 13th centuries, building techniques were much more refined. The buildings are massive, and the craftsmanship is superb. The time and energy required for these projects is enormous – not to mention the cost! The detail in the carvings and in the stained glass windows is amazing. Just think how much time it would take to make even one of the ornate carvings or statues. It's a slow, patient process to build a cathedral or a stone circle.

This innate desire for ritual and worship is the same that draws us to meditation. We want to find ways to experience the presence of God. Fortunately for us, other spiritual seekers have taught that we don't have to build grand

edifices in order to do that. These structures have their place, but there is also a much simpler way. The building that we enter is our own body, where we meet the Spirit who dwells within us. In the silence of our hearts we are able to experience the presence of the living God.

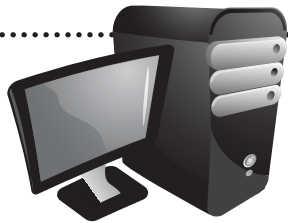


Building our practice of meditation takes time and patience. It also takes effort, because the building won't grow unless we use the building blocks of our regular meditation periods. At times our progress seems so slow that it might feel that we are trying to build a cathedral. But there is a beauty that is appreciated by God each time

we sit down to meditate. It is as if we are shaping an ornate carving, and God takes delight as the carving emerges. We can delight too, because there are benefits that we experience as our meditation practice continues. We are gradually being transformed, and we can look back and celebrate the changes that God has brought about in our lives.

Constructing a cathedral took decades, so many of the artisans who worked on them never got to see the end result. It was a lifetime's work, where they used their gifts to create something beautiful. Meditation is a lifetime's work as well. By God's grace we use our gift of time in prayer to create something spiritually beautiful – us.

Phil Barnett
National Coordinator



HELP WANTED

We are looking for someone to assist with the coordination of this newsletter.

If you would like more information about what is involved, please contact joseph.clarkson@rogers.com

Canadian Christian Meditation Community National Resource Centre

(5964 ave. Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Suite 208
corner ave. Royal)

P.O. Box 52, Station NDG
Montreal, Quebec H4A 3P4
514-485-7928

christianmeditation@bellnet.ca
www.meditatio.ca

Editorial Team

Phil Barnett, Joseph Clarkson, Colleen Donald,
Joy Gordon and Mark Schofield.

Send submissions to Joseph Clarkson, Newsletter Coordinator.
E-mail: joseph.clarkson@rogers.com or newsnotes@bellnet.ca

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
or e-mail lagrottefranciscains@sympatico.ca.

Page design: www.khatvanga.com

NEWS FROM

A sandwich board at General Synod?

The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada took place June 2-11 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It seemed a good idea to arrange for a booth for Christian meditation – until we heard the cost. Somewhat more than we had on hand. I decided to wait until I got there.

The Anglican Orders booth let me put out some material. Then we learned that the adjacent table was only going to be used for one day so we put materials on one corner. A Synod official found a space we could use for a small meditation group and suggested putting up some signs. By this time it was halfway through Synod and the first meditation was scheduled for Monday morning at 6:30, one of the few times people would not be in session or eating.

Monday was lonely. Tuesday and Wednesday there were four of us. Thursday we were eight, and Friday, the last day of Synod, there were five. In the process I had checked listings of local meditation groups and made contact with Rev. Frances Drolet-Smith who provided pamphlets prepared for her own workshop, a CD player, candles and much encouragement.

Taking this approach was very haphazard. However, contacts were made and there were many opportunities to discuss the place of meditation in the common prayer life. A one-minute interview/video (which I have yet to see used) was requested by the Anglican Journal. The Lord appeared to be in the process. Steps proceeded and a presence was achieved. I had discussed the sandwich-board idea with Phil Barnett before going, and that is the only thing we didn't do.

Steve Cassidy
Wawanesa, MB

(Steve, a Christian meditation group leader, was a delegate at the Synod, which is held every three years.)

The way you pray is the way you live: Sharing our journey

Last May 29, some 70 meditators from the Ottawa area met at The Good Shepherd Parish to pray, sing Taizé hymns, and listen to richly moving personal accounts of the spiritual journeys of six people: Krister Partel, Charlotte Gupta, Don Myrick, Shirley Maguire, Elise Skinner and Brian Campbell. They were a good mix: male and female; young and not so young; some meditators for 25 years, others for two.

Though their paths were different, there was a quality of oneness to their journeys. All answered a call deep within themselves for a healing silence. All sought a freedom from the anxieties that make us “self-centred and prevent us from realizing the gift of love already deposited in our heart,” to quote Fr. Laurence Freeman. In different ways they had heard the Spirit that led them to this kingdom within, the prayer of the heart. And all found that over time, “a calm, a richness, a heart full of love, and the gifts of the Spirit” are manifested with greater awareness. They found the silence within which God’s voice can be heard.

More than 15 of the participants were new to meditation. Many expressed surprise – and gratitude – at discovering this way of prayer and that it is part of our Christian heritage. They were deeply touched by the personal stories and were also amazed at the “community of love” they were welcomed into.

John Main held that there are many reasons why people start to meditate, but only one reason that keeps people meditating. “I think we could describe it as a growing commitment to reality,” he concluded.

Pauline Skinner
Ottawa, ON

*The young and the not so young:
Krister Partel, National Youth Coordinator,
and Jacqueline McGuinty*



FAR AND NEAR



Bancroft and Ottawa meditators meet at Paul Harris's cottage

A group of 13 meditators from Bancroft and Ottawa, Ontario, met at the cottage of Paul Harris in Combermere, Ontario, August 21, for a day that included fun, games, swimming, barbecue, socialization and a John Main talk and meditation. This has been a midsummer tradition for many years and this year included a tour of the Madonna house apostolate in Combermere founded by Catherine de Hueck Doherty. She died in 1985 but since then the cause for her canonization as a saint has been officially opened in the Catholic Church.

.....

The Healing Silence

My name is Shirley Maguire and I am a member of two meditation groups: Emmanuel United Church and Resurrection of our Lord Church in Ottawa.

Over the years, I have tried different kinds of meditation – each one serving me well at that particular time. Now, I have found that Christian meditation is, for me, the ultimate in meditative practice. It makes differences in an inner part of my life that no one sees – no one.

Christian meditation is prayer without words, a silent prayer of the heart. We learn to *be still and know that I am God*, which is to enter into the silence and feel God's presence, God's love for us. This silence is at a very deep level, deeper than thought or feeling. It is a level of Spirit, where God dwells. We are not talking – but listening. We have a strong feeling of unity, a cohesiveness within our meditation group (Matthew 5:20: "Where two or three are gathered...") Even though we may not know everyone's name, we are present for the same purpose – we are one.


In today's world, we are bombarded by noise, by too many cars, cell phones, computers, Facebook... Advantageous as these are, they deprive us of peace and quiet, often making it hard to think and remember. Where is my book? Where are my keys? This is not early onset of Alzheimer's; it is a great need of the mind for peace and silence – the healing silence.

Meditation does not solve one's problems. However, it does provide tranquility and an inner strength to deal with them. This in turn benefits overall health and well-being.

A poem by Pauline Moore, entitled *Retreat*, reads:

Give me a quiet corner, Lord... a cool and cloistered place,
Where I can lift my heart toward the blessings of thy grace
Give me a time in every day, when I can turn to thee
And shut the noisy world away, so thou canst speak to me.

(The above is an edited version of a talk given May 29, 2010 at the Ottawa Meditation Community event *The Way You Pray is the Way You Live: Sharing Our Journey*, at The Good Shepherd Parish, Orleans.)



John Main Seminar

2010

James Alison

THE SHAPE OF GOD'S AFFECTION

The John Main Seminar was held at the University of Kent in Canterbury, England this year. The university is on a hill overlooking the city, with a wonderful view of the cathedral standing high above the other buildings.

Keynote speaker was James Alison, a Roman Catholic theologian, priest and author, currently based in São Paulo, Brazil. His theme was *The Shape of God's Affection*. He used scripture extensively, starting with what he called the great Hebrew breakthrough – God is not like any of the other gods. The Hebrew bible is polytheistic, where many gods are mentioned. There is a progression to henotheism (many gods but we are only to worship one), then to monotheism (there is only one God). This one God is unlike anything that we know. One of James' often-mentioned phrases was *God is not in rivalry with anything that is*. It was one of those ideas where I felt I grasped what he was talking about for a fleeting moment; then it was gone and I hadn't quite got it.

In his exploration of the Day of Atonement temple ritual, James made some clear connections with the gospel stories of Jesus' life and death. This was how *one who is not one of the gods* comes to occupy the space of a victim who then forgives the persecutors. It's not the way that any of the other gods would have done it, and it opens up new possibilities, new freedom and the chance to "play the game differently." In discussing the gentleness of God, James explained that the human victim on the cross is the Creator who comes, not in a rescue bid, but to open to us the fullness of being. This is a new creation story – from Gethsemane to the cross to the tomb of resurrection.

In his final talk, *Stay With Us*, James gave a fascinating insight into how we read scripture. Nowadays we ask

what does the text say. In Hebrew there are no vowels; the meaning is given by the reader who decides what a word is. For example *wrd* could be word, ward, wired, weird. So it's not *what does the text say?* but *how do you read the text?* It is through someone else's eyes that scripture is read and interpreted. In Jesus' time, the texts were seen through Moses' eyes. James used the Road to Emmaus story to explain that Luke intended us to see that it is through Jesus' eyes that we are to read and interpret the scriptures.

The addresses by James Alison were only part of the experience. Because the setting was Canterbury, the conference planners included Gregorian chant at each of the prayer times. One afternoon we attended Evensong in the cathedral, sung by a visiting choir from Holland, and afterwards went down to the crypt for meditation. In this ancient setting we listened to a soloist in a composition by Hildegard of Bingen. It was a deeply moving experience, which somehow united us with the many people who have worshipped and experienced God's presence there through the centuries.

The seminar is a wonderful opportunity to meet meditators from around the world and to engage in conversation with a wide range of people. The long line-ups at meal-times seemed to be where a conversation would begin with a stranger and then continue as we sat down to a meal together. Being a meditation conference, it's not surprising that there were three meditation periods each day. It is a profound experience to meditate in a room with 200 people. If you are able to attend a John Main Seminar, I certainly encourage you to go.

Phil Barnett
Winnipeg, MB

The Gift of Simplicity

Fundamentals of Christian meditation

Meditators are part of a movement to get to the core of Jesus' teachings. Jesus taught that having a relationship with God did not consist in rigidly following strict rules and regulations as much as in knowing and honouring God in our hearts. Glenda used the Tower of Babel story to represent a way of life that stressed human effort and achievement, but which led only to confusion and separation, from each other and from God.

Rather than building another Tower of Babel, Christian meditation celebrates four fundamental aspects of the Christian tradition:

1. It is rooted in the teachings of the desert fathers and mothers. These early Christians turned away from the secular trend of their age, and from secular incursions into the Church, and sought to live in a manner that was more faithful to the authentic teachings of Jesus.
2. We are restoring the practice of contemplative prayer to the lives of ordinary Christians, and are seeing the emergence of a monastery without walls.
3. There is a renewed interest in Scripture through practices such as *lectio divina* and Ignatian meditation.
4. A renewed interest in the mystics, Christians who had powerful, transformative experiences of the love of God. Their writings are today more accessible than ever and can help us in our desire to live authentic Christian lives.

Continued on page C10



Maureen Casey Rowed thanks the Rev. Glenda Meakin

Rev. Glenda Meakin facilitated the annual WCCM-Toronto retreat held at St. John the Divine Convent, June 4-6. She placed her topic within the context of changes documented in Phyllis Tickle's book, The Great Emergence. Tickle looks at patterns of social change since the time of Christ and identifies a recurring trend in the Christian tradition to do a "spring cleaning" every 500 years, "to identify and throw out excess baggage." This began with Jesus himself, who blew away centuries of cobwebs within the religious traditions that he knew. Thus, Tickle argues, we are now witnessing forces within Christian denominations that seek to return to the basics in a recurring trend towards simplification.



Calendar of Events

For regular updates go to www.meditatio.ca/News/updates.html

November 2010

3 November, Calgary, AB. *Introduction to Meditation – Part 1* led by Engeline Piet at FCJ Christian Life Centre 219-19th Avenue. Time: 7–9 p.m. Contact: Engeline Piet at FCJ Christian Life Centre, 403-228-4215.

10 November, Calgary, AB. *Introduction to Meditation – Part 2* led by Engeline Piet at FCJ Christian Life Centre 219-19th Avenue. Time: 7–9 p.m. Contact: Engeline Piet at FCJ Christian Life Centre, 403-228-4215.

12–14 November, Kingston, ON. *Fully Alive: a Christian Meditation and Yoga Retreat.* This retreat is an annual event, sponsored by the Canadian Meditation Community. Now in its sixth year, it is led by meditators and certified yoga teachers, and is open to newcomers and seasoned practitioners. Venue: Providence Spirituality Centre, Kingston, ON. Time: 6 p.m. Friday to 1 p.m. Sunday. For more information, contact Casey Rock at 647 618-2909 or check www.yogawithcasey.ca/retreats

23 November, Toronto, ON. Advent Series – Session 1 – *The Journey to Spiritual Intimacy*, led by Paul Harris. Venue: Scarboro Missions, 2685 Kingston Road. Time: 7–9 p.m. For more information, call 416-261-7135 ext 266 or www.scarboromissions.ca

25 November, Toronto, ON. Martin Laird on *The Riddles of Distraction* led by Carolyn Murray. Regular monthly teaching meeting at Knox College, University of Toronto, 59 St. George Street. Time: 7–9 p.m. For more information contact: Maureen Casey Rowed at 416-733-0233, e-mail <myetmoe@hotmail.com> or Joy Gordon 416-485-9718.

26–28 November, Kingston, ON. *Christian Meditation School (The Essential Teaching)*. Location: Providence Spirituality Centre, 1200 Princess Street, Kingston, K7L 4W4. Registrar: Ron Dicks, rdicks.school@gmail.com, 613-739-1046. Cost: \$195 (cheques made out to Meditatio and mail deposit of \$95.00 to Ron Dicks, 942 Weston Dr., Ottawa, ON K1G 1X2).

27 November, Calgary, AB. *Meditation Retreat Day* led by Engeline Piet at FCJ Christian Life Centre 219-19th Avenue. Registration 9 a.m. Time: 9:30 a.m.–4 p.m., includes lunch. Contact: FCJ Christian Life Centre, 403-228-4215.

December 2010

1, 8, 15 December, Toronto, ON. Advent Series on Prayer and Meditation. Facilitators include Betty Lou Knox CSJ, Joseph Clarkson, Katie Marshall Flaherty. Venue: Scar-

boro Missions, 2685 Kingston Road. Time: 7–9 p.m. For more information, call 416-261-7135 ext 266 or www.scarboromissions.ca

4 December, Ottawa ON. *Advent: Living Between Memory and Hope* with the Rev. Professor Kevin Flynn. Venue: Main Chapel, Saint Paul University, 223 Main St. Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (registration 9:15-9:45 a.m.). Cost: Donation. Free for full-time students. Bring a bag lunch and drink. Register by November 28 with Jeanette Deyell: jadeyell@gmail.com or 613-733-6755.

16 December, Toronto, ON. *Remembering John Main* led by Maureen Casey Rowed. Regular monthly teaching meeting at Knox College, University of Toronto, 59 St. George Street. Time: 7–9 p.m. For more information contact: Maureen Casey Rowed at 416-733-0233, e-mail <myetmoe@hotmail.com> or Joy Gordon 416-485-9718.

30 December, Montreal, QC. Celebration of Fr. John Main's Anniversary at the Loyola Chapel of Concordia University, 7141 Sherbrooke Street West, at 7:30pm. Information: Polly Schofield, 514-481-8746. mark.schofield@sympatico.ca.

January 2011

14–16 January, Toronto, ON. *Fully Alive: a Christian Meditation and Yoga Retreat.* This retreat will be led by Casey Rock and Joseph Clarkson and is open to newcomers to yoga as well as seasoned practitioners. Venue: St. John the Divine Convent, 233 Cummer Ave. Toronto, ON M2N 2E8. Time: 4 p.m. Friday to 1:30 p.m. Sunday. For more information, and to register, contact www.ssjd.ca or Casey Rock at 647-618-2909 or check www.yogawithcasey.ca/retreats. Fee of \$200 is payable to St. John the Divine Retreat Centre.

27 January, Toronto, ON. *Simply Being* led by John Callaghan. Regular monthly teaching meeting at Knox College, University of Toronto, 59 St. George Street. Time: 7–9 p.m. For more information contact: Maureen Casey Rowed at 416-733-0233, e-mail <myetmoe@hotmail.com> or Joy Gordon 416-485-9718.

May 2011

20–26 May, Bloomfield Mills, MI. *Getting Rid of God, a Christian Meditation Retreat* led by Fr. Laurence Freeman. Venue: Manresa Jesuit Retreat House, 1390 Quarton Rd., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304. Phone: (248) 644-4933 or (313) 564-6455; FAX: (248) 644-8291. E-mail: <office@manresa-sj.org>. Cost: \$525.00, includes non-refundable

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

Calendar of Events

registration fee of \$50.00 for retreat, private room and meals (first meal is Saturday breakfast). Register on line or mail our application form with \$50 check made out to Manresa.

2011 National Conference

10–12 June 2011, Ottawa, ON. Biennial National Conference presented by the Canadian Christian Meditation Community and hosted by the Anglican Studies Program of Saint Paul University. Theme: *John Main and 20th Century Mystics*. Keynote speakers: Fr. Laurence Freeman and Rev. Glenda Meakin. Workshop presenters: Fabrice Blée, Joseph Clarkson, Rev. Kevin Flynn and Sr. Janet Malone, CND.

Special event: *A Woman in Love*, a play about Catherine Doherty performed by Sr. Anne Kathleen McLaughlin, gsic. Cost: Residential \$295; Commuters \$220. Contact: Simon

Losinger 819-685-1872; email 2011ccmconference@gmail.com.

10 June, Ottawa. *Retreat for Clergy. One Thing Necessary: Contemplative Spirituality in an Active Ministry.* Led by Fr Laurence Freeman. Venue: Saint Paul University Amphitheatre, 223 Main Street, Ottawa, Ontario. Time: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost: \$20. Includes a light lunch. All clergy are welcome. Please register by May 31 with Charlotte Gupta at cgupta@rogers.com or 613-841-2894.

12 June, Ottawa. Youth Retreat facilitated by Fr. Laurence Freeman, OSB. Theme: *Silence in the City: a retreat for Youth and Young Adults.* Time: 3-6 p.m. Venue: Saint Paul University Amphitheatre, 223 Main Street, Ottawa ON. A light meal is included. There is no cost of admission. For information and to register, e-mail ChristianMeditationOttawa@gmail.com. Please register before June 4.

2011 National Conference Clergy and Youth Events

Don't you sometimes wish that your priest or pastor knew more about Christian Meditation, or that a young person you know would hear about it? Well, here is your chance to invite them to the retreats in Ottawa held around the time of the National Conference.

Perhaps you are on talking terms with your pastor, or the pastor recognizes you from greetings after Sunday services.

Why not try and approach him/her, providing information about the June 10 Clergy Event with Fr. Laurence? Similarly, a young man or woman may already have heard of meditation at university. Or this person may have experienced the stirrings of the contemplative life. Welcoming this person to the June 12 Youth Event with Fr. Laurence may be an icebreaker to participation in the event or to future conversations.

Support Your Christian Meditation Community

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 and we have 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 organize 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.
- this newsletter which keeps us informed about community events across the country.

All of these activities cost money to provide, so we rely on your financial support to enable us to continue this important work. Please take time to read the enclosed Annual Appeal brochure and respond with a gift. While there are many worthwhile charities to support, meditators are the only ones who will support this particular ministry of spreading the good news about meditation.

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

Phil Barnett, National Coordinator

The Gift of Simplicity

continued from page C7

Our daily meditation practice helps us to focus on the essentials of Jesus' teaching. Faithfulness to the practice sweeps the complexity from our hearts and makes room for the "gift of simplicity." We learn to focus on the reality that Jesus lives within us and gives us his Spirit, as an alternative to a Tower of Babel life, dominated by anxiety and fear. We move from a way of life where there is little evidence of love to unity with the Father, Son and Spirit.

Selling our birthright

Re-telling the story of Jesus curing the demoniac, Glenda illustrated how we too can be bound by demons, by busyness and other aberrants that have a stronger influence in our lives than the power of God's love. Our culture's hold on us makes it difficult to commit to the poverty of the mantra. We resist the simplicity of meditation. But God's love can liberate us from our demons – from dividedness and disunity.

God has brought us, via the language of the Spirit, to unity, simplicity and harmony. This is our birthright even though we often sell it for fluff: *How am I trying to build a tower to heaven? To stand out and be recognized as important?* Alternatively, Glenda challenged us to ask, *Am I open to being shaped and formed by the Holy Spirit? Am I receptive to becoming the person God made me to be? Where am I finding my identity?* She prodded us to turn from the divisive "kingdom of noise" and embrace silence as the language of the Spirit that can bring us together. The "gift of simplicity" comes from the Spirit and helps us know who we really are. We need to know, from experience, that we are the beloved of God.

Joseph Clarkson
Toronto, ON

Pay Attention

To pay attention is a way to pray

On nothing focus, neither thought nor thing

Permitting ego-self to slip away

Attention back unto the mantra bring

Yield up the past and future to the Now

Attention to the All-in-all to give

The all-pervading silence to allow

The all-pervading silence wherein live

Eternity is present in this breath

No need to act, or think, but simply be

This still awareness, that's akin to death

In just an instant, totally we see

Oh wonder, everything that is, is God

Not I, but Wonder, does my being trod.

Rosemary Lutter

November 17, 2009

(musing on talks by Fr. Lawrence Freeman, www.wccm.org)



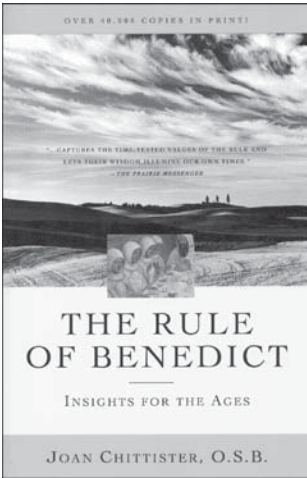
Why should you meditate?

Why should anyone meditate?

The tradition that has brought us all together tells us that what each of us needs if we are to live our life fully, if we are to expand our spirit fully, what each of us needs is purity of heart – that clarity of perception that will enable us to see reality as it is, to see ourselves as we are, to see others as they are: the redeemed and loved of God; and to see God as he is: absolute Love. To see all that we require is purity of heart which means to say that we need to be able to see straight ahead of us without refracting our vision through the prism of the ego.

– John Main, *Fully Alive*

PUBLICATIONS



The Rule of Benedict: Insight for the Ages

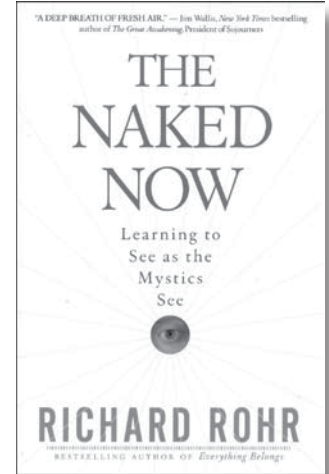
Joan Chittister OSB #5097 \$19.00

The Benedictine way is the spirituality of the twenty-first century because it deals with issues facing us now – stewardship, relationships, authority, community, balance, work, simplicity and prayer. Any religious or lay person will welcome and identify with this book's universal themes and concrete examples. Its message is profound and yet accessible to those "beginners" for whom Benedict intended his rule in the first place. By offering informed commentary that links Benedict's Rule with contemporary questions, Sr. Joan succeeds in her task of making an ancient document accessible to a modern public.

The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See

Richard Rohr #5098 \$22.00

The enlightenment you seek in other religions has been present in Christianity from the beginning. Richard Rohr, a global leader in spiritual awakening, helps you recognize the forces – such as ego resistance and dual thinking – that separates you from your deeper self. Then, drawing from the Gospels and greatest Christian contemplatives, he shows you what it means to be spiritually awake. *The Naked Now* is a deep breath of fresh air. Richard Rohr invites us, all of us, to slow down and to find God, or be found by God, in all the places we never thought to look.



2011 World Community Calendar – Recognising

#5099 \$10.00

The photographs in this calendar were taken by Fr Laurence Freeman during his visits to the many Christian meditation communities around the world. The accompanying words are excerpted from Fr John Main's teachings. Community dates are listed for 2011 as well as the major Christian holy days and feasts.

Canadian Christian Meditation Community – Newsletter – Publications

I wish to receive renew the Newsletter – suggested contribution \$15

ORDER PUBLICATIONS:

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

QUANTITY	CAT. NO	TITLE	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL PRICE
_____	5097	<i>The Rule of Benedict: Insight for the Ages</i>	\$19.00	_____
_____	5098	<i>The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See</i>	\$22.00	_____
_____	5099	2011 WCCM Calendar – Recognising	\$10.00	_____
_____	6103	<i>Silence & Stillness in Every Season</i> (see page 12)	\$17.50	_____
_____	8063	<i>Taste and See The Goodness of the Lord</i> (see page 12)	\$15.50	_____

Tax receipts will be issued for donations to the Newsletter of over \$15

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO AND MAIL TO:

Meditatio – Christian Meditation Community
P.O. Box 52, Station NDG, Montreal, QC H4A 3P4

TOTAL	_____
POSTAGE + 10%	_____
NEWSLETTER	_____
TOTAL AMOUNT	_____

ENCOUNTERING THE **DIVINE** . . . IN BEAUTY . . .



On Thursday June 17, Joseph Clarkson used scripture, photography, and the music of Margaret Rizza to engage his audience in *Encountering the Divine in Beauty*. He quoted from the Psalms and the Wisdom of Solomon to show the portrayal of creation as a reflection of God's beauty. Experiencing the awesome beauty of nature transports us to turn to the Creator in praise and thanksgiving.

The world is charged with the grandeur of God, it will flame out, like shining from shook foil.

– Gerard Manley Hopkins
 English poet (1844-1889)

Joseph suggested that, historically, there has been too much emphasis on the concept of an all-knowing, all-powerful Deity, which has led to a rather remote and sterile perception of God. Citing prayers by St. Teresa of Avila and St. Augustine, he argued that the mysterious nature of the experience of beauty can help us to capture the intimacy of our relationship with God. Poets and theologians alike have depicted beauty as a gateway to an encounter with, or a pointer to, God. It is not accidental that we have senses that give richness and fullness to our experience of creation – in colours, odours and textures. God wanted us, from

the beginning of time, to be fed by the abundance of love in creation. We are attuned to knowing that there is a design and order to our reality.

With the Psalmist, we sense God as the author or artisan behind creation: “The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.” (Psalm 19) And in the Wisdom of Solomon, we read, “From the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of the Creator.” While modern life gives us the illusion of control and makes us feel like gods, an experience of the beauty of nature can often put us in our proper place, letting us know that we are not God.

Every experience of beauty points to infinity.

– Hans Urs von Balthasar
 Swiss theologian (1905-1988)

We can be possessive in our understanding of creation, or we can know it as gift and give thanks to the Giver. The choice is ours. The choice is easier to those who meditate daily, relinquishing control to our Creator and striving to identify with our deeper self. As we train in *letting go*, we are better able to transfer this experience to our day-to-day activities, where we choose to want, to need, to possess, or we can choose to acknowledge God and be thankful.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
 Canadian Christian Meditation Community
 P.O. Box 52, Station NDG
 Montreal, Quebec H4A 3P4

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40007931